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The Residents of the Town of Easton

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

It has been indicated from numerous sources during the course of this update that the Comprehensive Development Plan adopted in 1974 was the product of substantial community involvement and years of research and plan development by the Town of Easton and the Maryland Department of State Planning. The long-range vision and foresight of those who developed the 1974 Plan is quite evident. Many of the Policies, Goals, Objectives and Principals outlined in that Plan are still very much valid and applicable to the Town of Easton today. Therefore, it is not the intent of this update to rewrite the 1974 Plan, but rather to improve upon its original foundation. Information has been brought up to date, projections forwarded, maps revised, and policies, goals and objectives reevaluated and restated when appropriate or modified in response to changes in the community.

Since the 1974 Easton Comprehensive Plan was adopted, a great deal of change has occurred in the Town. Growth pressures along the Route 50 corridor and at the Town's eastern and western edges require that the Town take an active role in managing the location, timing and quality of future Town development. Strengthening plan policies and recommending implementation strategies for growth management is a priority of this update.

The Easton Comprehensive Development Plan establishes Town policies relative to the most desirable development patterns for Easton and environs. It identifies in both narrative and graphic form proposed areas for living and working activities and related services which are required to assure a quality environment for all residents. Implementation proposals are included as methods for coordinating public and private development activities, which together will influence Town development form and function.

The policies which are presented throughout this document are the results of a community planning process and established Town Goals and Objectives. As officially adopted policies of the Town they will serve as the basis for future decisions on capital improvements, ordinance revisions, rezoning requests, subdivision approvals and other development approval matters. Plan policies in each of the Plan Elements are numbered for ease of reference.

The Plan may be described as being general, long range, and comprehensive.

GENERAL

To provide guidance for locating public and private land uses in a desirable development pattern, the Plan concentrates upon major development concepts but does not attempt to address every development issue in detail. The Plan reflects current Town policies toward the general location, character and extent of future development. Individual development decisions will be reviewed for their relationship to Plan policies.

LONG RANGE

The Comprehensive Development Plan addresses the growth and development of Easton through the year 2010. Because of its long range orientation, it is recommended that the Plan be reviewed and revised as changing circumstances dictate, or at least every five (5) years. The long range nature of the Plan requires that projects proposed to resolve current problems or address more immediate needs should be structured to achieve consistency with long range development objectives.

COMPREHENSIVE

The Easton Plan concentrates upon major concepts concerning essential physical elements which constitute the immediate environment of the Town. Plan recommendations are proposed in recognition of Easton's position in the central portion of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and its relationship to metropolitan areas in the Baltimore-Washington Corridor. Various economic, cultural and social factors which influence local development issues are essential considerations in formulating Plan elements.

The Town Council is responsible under Maryland law for adopting the Plan. The Town Planning Commission is responsible for general administration and enforcement of the Plan. All development proposals should be reviewed for conformance to basic policies and programs identified by the Plan.

After adoption, the Plan will serve as:

- * A unified statement of desirable development policies.
- * A framework within which specific development issues can be evaluated and public policy effectuated consistent with the long range growth and development goals and objectives of the Town.
- * An information document for local elected officials, citizens, developers and special interest groups concerning critical development issues as well as Town development policies..

Preparation of the Easton Comprehensive Development Plan represents an important step in the complex process of guiding future development in the interest of the general public. Adoption of the Plan will constitute a first step in directing the forces of development in a desirable spatial pattern. Future Planning Commission and Town Council activities will be directed towards reviewing specific development proposals, periodic revisions of the Plan in view of new conditions, broadening the scope of the Plan, and facilitating Plan implementation in a continuing effort to improve the quality of life for all Easton residents.

PLAN BACKGROUND

PLAN BACKGROUND

REGIONAL SETTING

When planning for Easton's future, the location of the Town and the interdependence of the Town with other geographic and economic regions is of prime importance. The future population and economic vitality of Easton is determined, not only by local activities, but also by activities in the larger region of which Easton is a part. To this extent, it is essential to relate the Town of Easton to Talbot County, the Eastern Shore, the Delmarva Peninsula, and larger metropolitan areas within close proximity.

Easton, the County seat, is situated in the central portion of Talbot County. The Town is located near the headwaters of the Tred Avon River, which provides access to the Chesapeake Bay. In 1980, the Town was the third largest municipality on the Eastern Shore with a population of 7,536 inhabitants. 1987 population is estimated to be 8,458. The Town contains 31% of the County's population and is the market and service center of the central portion of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Easton is located adjacent to U.S. Route 50 which provides excellent access to many other major highways. U.S. Route 50 is a major route connecting the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area to the coastal resort of Ocean City on Maryland's lower shore. The Town is home to a regional municipal airport.

Talbot County, in the central portion of the Eastern Shore, is characterized by gently rolling land areas virtually surrounded by the Chesapeake Bay and four of its major tributaries. Talbot County contains over 600 miles of waterfront. Its land and adjacent waters have support agriculture and seafood processing activities which have historically formed a substantial portion of the County's economic base. Development in recent years reflects diversification of this base economy to include a broader manufacturing, service, and tourism economy. Over 75% of the 279 square miles of County land is arable. In 1980, 25,604 people lived in the County, an increase of 8% over 1970. The estimated 1987 population of the County is 28,008 reflecting a sustained if not greater rate of increase in recent years.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland contains nine counties with a 1980 population of 296,620 and a population density of 78 persons per square mile. An abundance of fresh water and favorable soil characteristics enhance the Eastern Shore's value for agricultural purposes. Industrial activity in the region is historically related primarily to agricultural activities and processing of seafood taken from the numerous waterways. However, since 1970, several industries have located on the peninsula which are not reliant upon food products. These include manufacturing, electronics assembly and commercial services, resulting in significant industrial diversification.

"Delmarva" is a term which describes the 6,057 square mile peninsula encompassing nine Maryland counties, most of the State of Delaware and two Virginia Counties. Fifty-five percent of the land area and roughly 1/3 of the population of the Delmarva Peninsula is in Maryland. The peninsula is bounded by the Chesapeake Bay on the west and south, and the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. The peninsula lies almost entirely within the Atlantic coastal Plain region. According to the 1980 Census, Delmarva had a population of 849,000

people with a population density of 140 persons per square mile. Easton is located northwest of the geographical center of the peninsula.

Enjoying relative proximity to surrounding states, Easton is located approximately 20 miles from Delaware, 80 miles from Pennsylvania and 85 miles from Virginia. The Town enjoys excellent access to major metropolitan areas. From Easton, it is 59 miles to Baltimore, 62 miles to Washington, 85 miles to Wilmington and 114 miles to Philadelphia (See Map 1).

With today's modern highway facilities, distance ceases to be as important a consideration as travel time. Easton is within 1 1/2 hours of the sixth largest consumer market in the United States, the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Philadelphia and New York, two larger consumer markets, are 2-3 hours travel time from Easton. Within 350 miles of Easton live approximately 34% of the U.S. population and 40% of the U.S. industrial market. Thus, Easton is within three hours of the six largest consumer markets in the U.S.

Because of the natural attractiveness of its living and working environments, Easton will increasingly be considered as a possible relocation site for people and industries. As other areas become less attractive, the Easton area will be encouraged by outside influences to grow and develop. It is the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan to provide the Town with a guide to organize its growth in a pattern and at a rate which can be accommodated within the human and fiscal resources of the Town.

POPULATION

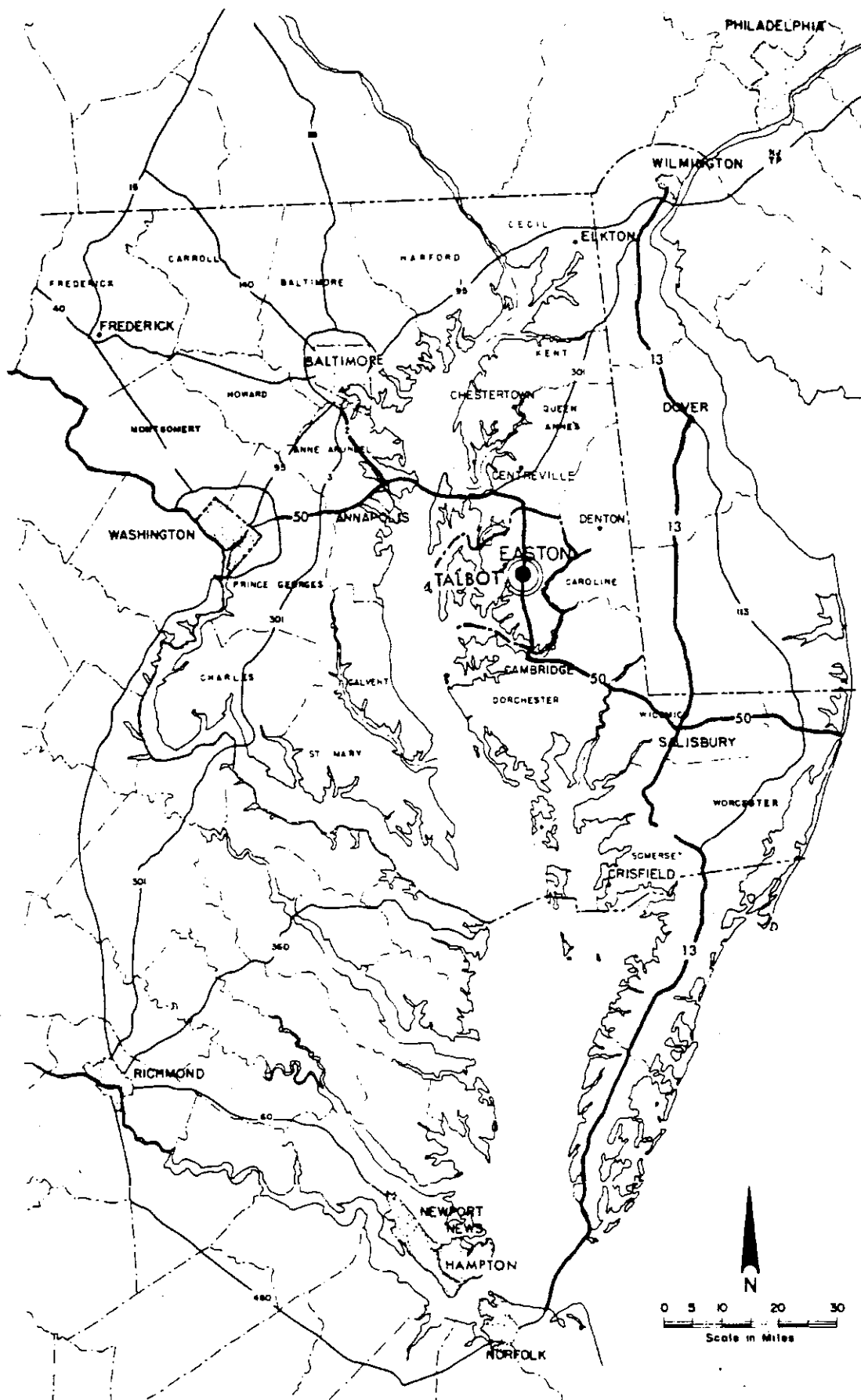
Easton has experienced moderate but consistent population growth since its founding. In recent years the rate of growth has increased substantially. The major departure from this trend was in the decade from 1950-1960 when annexation accounted for an increase of 1,843 people. The following table reflects increases in population within the incorporated Town by the number and percent from 1950-1980.

TABLE 1
POPULATION TRENDS
1950 - 1980

	<u>1950-1960</u>	<u>1960-1970</u>	<u>1970-1980</u>
Population	4494-6337	6337-6809	6809-7536
Percent change	(41%)*	(7.4%)	(10.2%)

* High percentage due to annexation

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census and Redman/Johnston Associates



**REGIONAL LOCATION
EASTON, MARYLAND**

From the 1940's to the 1960's Easton attracted people from outlying Talbot County areas. Historically in Talbot County, Easton has grown while bayside towns and surrounding agricultural areas lost population. In the latter 60's and 70's, however, the Town's growth slowed in relation to neighboring sections. In 1960, the Town of Easton comprised 62.6% of all residents of Talbot County Election District #1 but by 1970, decreased slightly to 61.0% of the district. According to the most recent census data available, in 1980 the Town comprised 61.9% of all residents in the first election district.

Changes in population trends affect the direction and rate of growth. Population figures for outlying districts indicate that people were establishing homes in these areas rather than in the Town during the review period of 1970-1980. This may have been predicated by the lack of affordable housing or high land costs within the Town. The higher rate of growth evidenced in the period 1980 to 1987 indicates this may no longer be a dominant trend.

The racial composition of the Town's population is changing slowly. The non-white population represented 28% of the total population in 1980. This represented a 4.1% increase during the 1970 - 1980 period.

The age composition of the population is also changing. Table 2, located on the following page, Age Distribution shows the patterns of age distribution from 1960 to 1980. Both the number and percentage of children under 5 declined from 1960 to 1980, while the number and percentage of young adults, especially those between 15 and 24 years of age, increased. Recent school enrollment projections indicate that the number of school age children has been increasing in recent years. Adults between 30 and 44 declined in both number and percentage in that decade while the number and percentage of adults over 45 increased.

Changes in the general age distribution for local residents results in a complex series of demands on the level of local services. The increase in the number of adults reflects a larger number of people available for the labor market. When older populations increase, medical facilities and convenience services normally reflect a corresponding increase, as evidenced by the Hospital expansion and development of related services along Dutchman's Lane and Idlewilde Avenue in the recent decade. As the characteristics of the population change, so must the direction of community services.

TABLE 2
AGE DISTRIBUTION 1960-1980
EASTON, MARYLAND

	<u>1960</u>		<u>1970</u>		<u>1980</u>	
	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Total %</u>
Under 5	678	10.7	472	6.9	407	5.4
5 to 9	551	8.7	569	8.4	363	4.8
10 to 14	510	8.0	575	8.4	506	6.7
15 to 19	393	6.2	580	8.5	599	7.9
20 to 24	380	6.0	494	7.3	710	9.4
25 to 29	380	6.0	420	6.2	691	9.2
30 to 34	434	6.8	308	4.5	541	7.2
35 to 44	858	13.5	732	10.8	739	9.8
45 to 54	775	12.2	847	12.4	736	9.8
55 to 65	601	9.5	785	11.5	882	11.7
65 to 74	484	7.6	546	8.0	746	9.9
75 and Over	<u>292</u>	<u>4.6</u>	<u>481</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>616</u>	<u>8.2</u>
Total Population	6,337	100%	6,809	100%	7,536	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census and Redman/Johnston Associates.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

To project 1990, 2000 and 2010 population levels the Plan assumes three possible population growth rates for the Town which appear to represent the most feasible lower, middle and upper ranges of growth during the planning period. The first projection assumes that population growth trends experienced in the recent past, 1980-1987, will continue into the future. 1980 population was 7,536 and 1987 population is estimated to be 8,458, a 12 percent increase for the seven (7) year period or a **1.7 percent average annual growth rate**. This rate of growth is assumed to be the minimal amount of growth the Town will sustain in light of recent growth trends. At a 1.7 percent average annual increase, population can be expected to reach 8,897 in 1990, 10,530 in 2,000, and 12,462 in 2010.

The level of population growth in the Town has not been static in recent years. In the past few years Easton Utilities has reported an average annual population increase of 3 percent annually. By projecting a **constant 3 percent average annual population increase**; population in 1990 can be expected to reach 9242, 12,419 in 2,000 and 16,690 in 2010. This rate of growth is assumed to be the maximum amount of growth the Town may be able to efficiently sustain during the Plan period.

A middle projection for population growth is based on the increasing rate of growth evidenced through the period of 1960-1987. Rate of growth is reflected as a percentage increase in population for the periods 1960-1970 and 1970-1980. In these periods the percentage increase in population was 7.4 percent and 10.2 percent respectively. Based on the estimated increase in population from 1980 through 1987 (12%) the projected increase for 1980-1990 of 16.26 was derived. Assuming a constant increase in rate of growth per decade as evidenced in past years the projected Town population for 1990 of 8,765, 2,000 of 10,573, and 2010 of 13,229 are estimated.

Table 3 illustrates the comparison between the low, medium and high population projections for the Town of Easton. While actual population growth is anticipated to fall within the range of projections presented, it is impractical to make a single accurate projection for any given year. The Plan recognizes that many factors outside of the Town's influence will affect Easton's rate of growth; including national and regional economic growth, population migration, and the growth policies of neighboring jurisdictions. The Town will, to a large extent, have substantial influence over the level of population growth through the policies adopted in this Plan. Major forces currently driving the Town's growth are continually increasing in-migration patterns and a higher birth rate caused by a larger component of the Town population falling within the child bearing ages.

TABLE 3
VARIABLE POPULATION PROJECTIONS
TOWN OF EASTON

<u>Projection</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Low*	8,897	10,530	12,462
Medium*	8,765	10,573	13,229
High*	9,242	12,419	16,690

*Low: 1.7% average annual increase

*Medium: 4.4% average increase in growth per decade

*High: 3% average annual increase

Source: Redman/Johnston Associates

INCOME

Income statistics present an overall view of the community's economic health. Without a suitable distribution of income, many facets of the Town's economy are restricted because local residents can't provide for their own needs in the private market.

Extreme income groups, upper and lower, demand different and sometimes conflicting types of housing, retailing needs and community services. The high income groups demand a more expensive life style than the low income groups are able to afford. Lower income groups are less able to provide for their own needs and in turn look to governmental agencies for community services. Both categories are significantly large in Easton indicating that the diverse needs of each group will need to be considered.

While the percentage of families with low incomes substantially declined through the period 1959 to 1979, poverty was and is still present in Easton. According to the 1980 Census, there were 437 families, or 13.8% of total families within the Town, with incomes less than \$5,000 in 1979. (See Table 4)

Over 1,000 households representing roughly 33% of all town households in 1979 had incomes less than \$10,000 annually. Therefore, while incomes continue to rise, inflation and adjustments to the definition of poverty, established by the Bureau of the Census, still result in a large number and percentage of households within the Town which can be considered low and moderate income. Housing affordability continues to be a problem for families in these income groups.

TABLE 4
FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 1979
EASTON, MARYLAND

<u>Income Category</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$5,000	437	13.8%
5,000 - 9,999	611	19.3%
10,000 - 14,999	617	19.6%
15,000 - 19,999	479	15.2%
20,000 - 24,999	340	10.8%
25,000 - 34,999	443	14.1%
35,000 - 49,999	160	5.1%
50,000+	<u>65</u>	<u>2.1%</u>
	3152	100.0%

* 1979 dollars

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

LAND USE

At the present time, Easton contains approximately 4,900 acres. Annexation of land in the 1970's and 1980's significantly increased land within the corporate limits by some 2,000 acres. Approximately 53 percent of the Town's land area is developed and 47 percent is undeveloped (see table 5 and Generalized Existing Land Use Map). Land use patterns show a concentration of offices, service oriented business, and retail establishments in the downtown area with automotive and highway service

facilities concentrated adjacent to U.S. Route 50. Although many of the activities within Easton have urban characteristics, the substantial amount of undeveloped land provides a scenic and rural atmosphere for Town residents.

In 1987 residential land uses comprised 18 percent of the total Town land area. Of all residential land, 86 percent was devoted to single-family dwellings. Multi-family residential comprised only 14 percent. Of all developed land, 37 percent was in residential use.

Commercial land uses include uses which may be characterized as commercial services oriented, business/office and retail establishments. Retail and Commercial Services which included highway oriented businesses accounted for 78 percent of all commercial land. Business/Office uses accounted for 22 percent of the commercial lands. Roughly, 8 percent of the total land area of the Town was devoted to commercial use.

Industrial land use currently accounts for only 2 percent of the total land area and 5 percent of the developed land area.

The amount of land classified as parkland accounted for only about 2 percent of the total land area. The lands included in the parks category included school play areas and ball fields.

A breakdown of the public/semi-public land uses are an important component of the overall land use in Easton. These uses include the County Library, Court House, and YMCA as examples. These uses represent about 5 percent of the total land area and 9 percent of the developed land area.

Land devoted to transportation facilities accounted for 34 percent of developed land and 17 percent of the total land area with much of this figure represented in the airport property.

The 47 percent of land which is undeveloped provides Easton with ample space for future development and permits greater flexibility in determining future land use patterns.

TABLE 5
LAND USE DISTRIBUTION
TOWN OF EASTON

	1967			1987		
	<u>Town of Easton</u>			<u>Town of Easton</u>		
	Total Acres	Percent Total Land	Percent Developed Land	Total Acres	Percent Total Land	Percent Developed Land
<u>Residential</u>	<u>483</u>	23.4	39.7	<u>904</u>	18.4	36.6
Single Family	440			774		
Multi-Family	43			130		
<u>Commercial</u>	<u>212</u>	10.3	17.4	<u>372</u>	7.6	15.1
Commercial Service				193		
Business Office				83		
Retail	91			96		
<u>Industrial</u>	<u>37</u>	1.8	3.0	<u>113</u>	2.3	4.6
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>267</u>	12.9	21.9	<u>844</u>	17.2	34.2
Airports						
Streets						
<u>Public/Semi-Public</u>	<u>191</u>	9.1	15.7	<u>235</u>	4.8	9.0
<u>Parkland*</u>	<u>27</u>	1.3	2.2	<u>103</u>	2.1	3.96
<u>Vacant</u>	<u>835</u>	40.5		<u>2291</u>	46.8	0.0
<u>Water</u>	<u>12</u>	.6		<u>38</u>	.8	
All lands in corporate limits	2064			4900 Acres		

*School Land and Recreation Areas are classified under Parkland.

*Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to errors in rounding.

Source: Redman/Johnston Associates, Ltd.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The formation of community goals and objectives is the initial step in the planning process and an integral part of the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Town of Easton. Goals and objectives embody the development philosophy of Town residents which provide meaning and purpose to the efforts of public and private individuals in creating a community which is not only functional but aesthetically pleasing as well. The purpose of such goals and objectives is to serve as the basis for formulating overall development policies, which in turn serve as the framework for both public and private decisions relative to development of the Town of Easton.

The following goals and objectives represent the underlying concepts by which the Comprehensive Development Plan was approached.

The overall goal for the growth and development of the Town of Easton is:

To promote the development of a community with economic vitality, attractive neighborhoods, excellent facilities for education and recreation, and environmental factors which will help all residents to enjoy their desired quality of life.

In formulating the Comprehensive Plan, broad community goals for each plan element are expressed in terms of a number of general objectives for the future development of the Town.

LAND USE

GOAL

To provide for the appropriate use of limited land resources within a framework of orderly and controlled growth and development in accordance with the development policies of the Town of Easton as identified in this Plan.

OBJECTIVES

- * Establish a land use framework consistent with the efficient and planned provision of public services.
- * Provide for a variety of types of residential areas in appropriate locations of the Town.
- * Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Town.
- * Provide adequate land for local and regional commercial activities in appropriate locations of the Town.

- * Provide adequate land for select or light industrial uses in appropriate locations of the Town.
- * Promote forms of development which provide valuable open spaces and efficient development patterns.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

GOAL

To promote decent, safe and sanitary housing availability for all residents.

To preserve and improve the stability of Easton's neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVES

- * Provide opportunities for affordable housing for low and moderate income residents.
- * Promote the rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing and the elimination and redevelopment of dilapidated units.
- * Encourage greater housing opportunities for the Town's growing elderly population.
- * Protect and preserve existing neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible land uses and activities.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOAL

To maintain and improve the vitality of the Town's Central Business District (CBD) as an active specialty retail, business/office, government center.

To continue to preserve and protect the Town's historic and architecturally significant structures as important components of the downtown's character and attractiveness.

OBJECTIVES

- * Improve upon the CBD's character and attractiveness as a growing tourism/specialty retail destination.
- * Continue to consolidate governmental office functions in the CBD.

- * Improve traffic flows through and within the CBD and improve the adequacy of parking availability.
- * Maintain and enhance the Town's historic character.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL

To ensure that there are adequate areas and amounts of parks and open space located throughout the Town which are beneficial to all residents.

To protect the valuable natural resources of the Town for the benefit of existing and future residents.

OBJECTIVES

- * Preserve as community open spaces, whenever possible, land adjacent to the Town's rivers, streams, and other water bodies.
- * Create more functional, smaller-scale park and open space areas throughout the Town.
- * Create a new park facility in the northern end of Town.
- * Require new development, when appropriate, to preserve existing natural features and to dedicate park and open space lands as conditions of development approval.
- * Implement the Town's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL

To ensure the continued adequate maintenance and expansion of community facilities and public services necessary to guarantee public health, safety and welfare and enhance residents quality of life.

OBJECTIVES

- * Distribute the cost of community facilities and public services equitably between the public, the developer and future users.
- * Require all new development to pay for or provide all road, water, sewer, and other community facilities and services extensions and additions needed as a result of new development. Require all community facilities

and services users to pay a "fair-share" of capital costs for scheduled system improvements.

- * Ensure the adequate provision of community facilities and services and public services in a planned and efficient manner consistent with development policies established in this Plan.
- * Ensure that community facilities and public services are provided equitably to all Town residents.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL

To provide a functional road and street system for the safe, convenient and efficient movement of people, goods and services among places of residence, employment, shopping and recreation and to provide a circulation system which is compatible with, and promotes, the logical and rational development of the Town of Easton.

OBJECTIVES

- * Maximize the capacity, safety and efficiency of the existing street and highway system.
- * Improve access to, and movement within, the Central Business District.
- * Improve the circulation system to provide for better separation of through and local traffic.
- * Improve east-west access in the northern end of Town.
- * Control development adjacent and near the Easton Municipal Airport so as not to allow incompatible land uses to develop which could possibly restrict the future growth of air service and facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

To maintain a viable economy which is protective of the Town and County's traditional economic base and which encourages further investment diversification and expansion to offer a broad range of employment and business opportunities responsive to citizen needs.

OBJECTIVES

- * Diversify and expand the Town's and County's economic base.

- * Support future expansion of retail and service businesses.
- * Support new and expanding businesses to the full extent allowed by zoning and utility services.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

GOAL

To set forth regulations, methods and procedures that will serve as a guide for public and individual actions to attain the Community Goals and Objectives and Development Policies adopted in the Comprehensive Development Plan.

OBJECTIVES

- * Update and revise the Town Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision regulations and other codes to reflect the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations of the Plan each time the Plan is updated.
- * Revise development site plan review procedures as needed.
- * Facilitate greater intergovernmental and Town/County coordination concerning development planning and approval.

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

The Land Use Plan Element provides policies for the orderly and planned development of the Town of Easton. The Conceptual Development Plan Map contained in the back of this Plan provides a graphic representation of the desired pattern of land uses within the Town. The Land Use Plan Element is geared to accommodate the range of population growth scenarios expected during the plan period to the year 2010. Implementation of the Land Use Plan Element policies will be achieved through the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program and planned road and community facilities (water and sewer) improvements.

The use of land within the Town is the result of many physical, economic and social forces. The Land Use Plan Element reflects an attempt by the Town to equitably balance the achievement of Town goals and objectives for development with private property rights and interests. The Land Use Plan Element addresses issues and identifies Town policies relative to residential, commercial, and industrial development as well as the provision of lands for parks and open spaces.

GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

Certain Town Policies regarding land use effect all types of development in the Town and establish the basic framework for Town development.

- 4.1 All land use decisions and development approvals should be in conformance with planned and scheduled improvements to Town services (roads, water, sewer, schools, police and fire protection)**
- 4.2 All development should be located in conformance with the Comprehensive Development Plan and all applicable Town ordinances and regulations.**
- 4.3 Adequate buffers and landscaping treatment should be provided as design solutions in certain unavoidable instances when incompatible land uses occur in proximity to one another, and when such treatments will enhance the quality and appearance of the development.**
- 4.4 All development should be required to be sensitive of the existing natural resources of the site regardless of the type of development or its location.**
- 4.5 All development should be planned and constructed to be harmonious of, and complimentary to, the character of both the neighborhood in which it is to be built in and the Town as a whole.**
- 4.6 Site plan review should be required for all multi family residential, commercial, and industrial development within the Town.**

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Historically, the older, more established residential sections of the Town within the Rt. 50/Easton Parkway loop have developed in traditional subdivision, grid street patterns. In recent years some multi-family and single-family residential neighborhoods both within the Town's core and outside of the Rt. 50/Easton Parkway loop are being designed and built as cluster developments. This emerging development pattern should be encouraged particularly in those areas of the Town where undeveloped tracts and parcels of land remain. Residential development or redevelopment in established residential neighborhoods should be done in a manner compatible with the surrounding area. Cluster development concepts work particularly well for multi-family developments. Single-family detached residential subdivisions can also benefit from the use of cluster concepts.

Cluster and other innovative residential development forms promote densities which are in keeping with current town-scale character as established in the Town Zoning Ordinance. Cluster development does not increase overall site density, but rather, it concentrates development on a smaller portion of the site enabling more land to be left in open space. Cluster forms of development provide many advantages to the Town including;

- * greater flexibility and creativity in site plan design for developers and enhanced opportunities for the Town to work with the developer to assure the development is in keeping with Town character and development policies regarding such items as road access, landscaping and aesthetics,
- * reduced utility (road, sewer, and water) extension and maintenance costs associated with more efficient and concentrated development patterns,
- * creation of coordinated and functional community open and green spaces and the preservation of the Town's natural resources through concentration of development on a smaller portion of the overall site,
- * greater opportunities for a wider diversity of housing types and affordability,
- * preservation of existing Town-scale densities, and
- * on larger sites, usually 10 acres or more, Planned Unit Developments (a larger scale of cluster development) allow for a functional mix of compatible but different land uses and housing types.

Planned unit developments (PUD) on larger undeveloped tracts within the Town (e.g., 10 acres or more) would allow for clustering of residential density thereby allowing smaller lot sizes and more concentrated site improvements (streets, storm drainage, sewer and water lines). Cost savings related to smaller residential lot sizes and more efficient site improvements can result in lower housing costs and greater housing affordability. By clustering site development density onto a portion of the site, the remainder of the site can be left undisturbed or in some form of community open space. Overall residential development densities of a PUD would remain the same as in a conventional subdivision or multi-family development.

In some larger PUD's, a limited amount of non-residential development (e.g., offices and neighborhood commercial activity) could be mixed into the PUD provided these activities are located and screened (landscaped and buffered) in such a manner to be compatible with surrounding residential land uses. By allowing some non-residential uses in the PUD (the amount to be determined by a sliding scale, e.g., the larger the PUD the larger allowable percentage of non-residential area), the developer can meet the neighborhoods immediate "convenience commercial" needs and also create better development economics to allow for the creation of more affordable housing units.

Traditional lower density, suburban-scale residential subdivisions (e.g. 1 home per acre) located within and adjacent to the Town's boundaries can potentially hinder the efficient provision of public utilities and services as the Town continues to grow. This form of development on the perimeter of the Town would tend to constrict future higher density Town-scale development thereby substantially limiting the future spatial growth of the Town. In addition, suburban-scale development is expensive for the Town to service and maintain. However, there is some demand in the Town for this type of residential development and therefore should be accommodated in appropriate and limited locations.

Figure 1 illustrates a comparison of conventional and cluster subdivisions. In the cluster development (B) road length is substantially shortened and approximately 30 acres of open space are provided. Figure 2 shows how different land uses can be compatibly incorporated on the same large site as a Planned Unit Development.

To accommodate a projected year 2000 population level of 10,573, ("medium" projection) approximately 250-350 acres of additional residential land within the Town will need to be developed. Approximately 881 living units will be required to house new residents assuming current density standards are maintained.

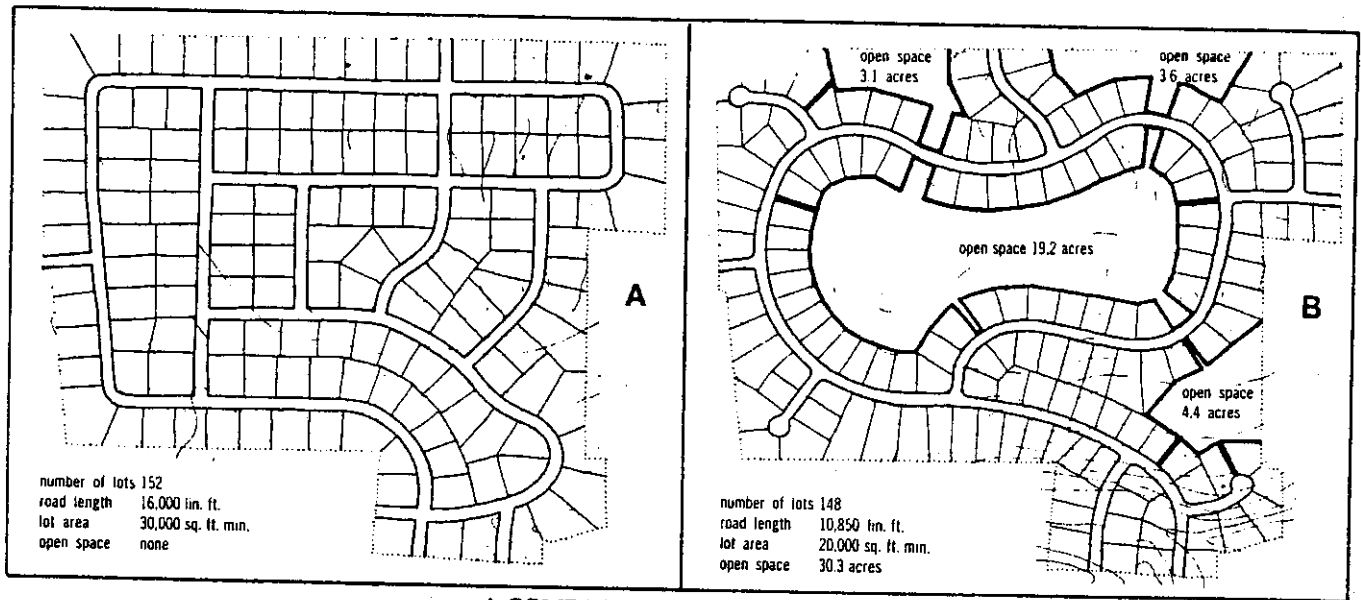
By 2010, assuming that a projected population of 13,229 ("medium" projection) becomes a reality, 277 additional acres of residential land will be required. To house the added 2656 people, 1,988 additional living units will need to be built. During the planning period to the year 2010 a total of nearly 2,000 additional housing units will be required, consuming approximately 500-800 acres of land. (See Table 6 Projected Residential Demand.)

TABLE 6
PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL DEMAND
TOWN OF EASTON, 1987 - 2010

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>PROJECTED POPULATION INCREASE</u>	<u>NEW HOUSING UNITS ADDED</u>
1987-2000	2,115	881
2000-2010	2,656	1,107
Total	4,771	1,988

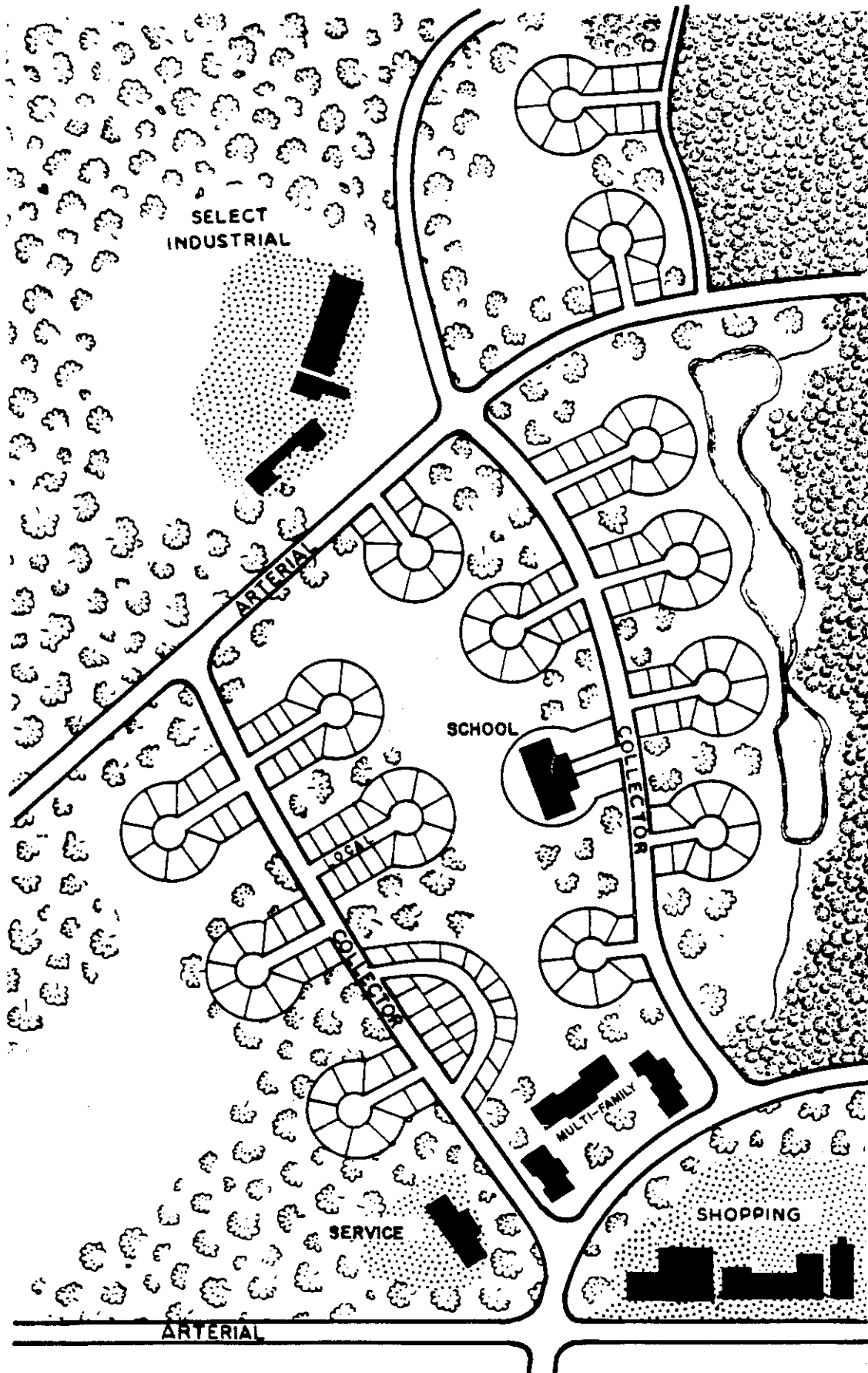
Assumes: Average Household Size of 2.4 Persons/Unit Based on 1980 Census.
Source: Redman/Johnston Associates, Ltd.

FIGURE 1



A COMPARISON OF CONVENTIONAL (A) AND CLUSTER (B) SUBDIVISIONS

FIGURE 2



PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

According to the 1987 land use survey there are currently 1,864 acres of undeveloped land in the Town. Ample land exists within the current Town boundaries to accommodate projected residential development at existing Town densities throughout the plan period. Physical and market constraints, however, prohibit the development of some Town lands for residential purposes thus potentially creating the need for the Town to annex and service adjacent County lands in the future. This scenario would become more probable if lower density suburban scale development occurs to a greater extent than at present.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Town policies for residential development are as follows:

- 4.7 Residential development should only be approved in areas serviced with adequate Town roads, water and sewer.
- 4.8 In-fill residential development in existing neighborhoods should be compatible with densities of the surrounding neighborhood.
- 4.9 Residential neighborhoods should be protected from incompatible land uses and activities and if in some unavoidable cases conflicting land uses are located in proximity to one another, adequate buffers should be provided to reduce potential adverse impacts.
- 4.10 Future residential development should occur only in those areas of the Town identified as appropriate by the Conceptual Development Plan Map and all applicable Town ordinances and regulations.
- 4.11 Cluster development, Planned Unit Development and other innovative planned development forms should be encouraged for single-family and multi-family developments in order to achieve the benefits of planned development patterns previously described.
- 4.12 All new residential developments should be required to provide adequate site improvements and amenities as necessary and appropriate (e.g. sidewalks, landscaping, buffers, open space).

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Existing land use patterns reflect the specialization and emergence of Easton as a regional retail service and office center. The Land Use Plan Element emphasizes the need for accommodating future commercial land use demands. All future commercial development should be compatible with existing commercial development in the Town. In addition commercial expansion in Easton should be planned and designed to complement existing regional and local commercial centers.

According to the 1987 Land Use Survey, approximately 301 acres of land were devoted to various commercial uses. Consistent with projected populations for 2010, commercial lands should increase by 191 acres to a year 2010 total of 492 acres. To meet 2000 population levels of 10,573 ("medium" projection), an additional 85 acres of

commercial land will be required. This projection assumes a standard of .04 acres of commercial land generated for each Town resident. This standard is based on a ratio between existing population and existing commercial land use. Future commercial development should contain greater amounts of landscaping and open space than has been required in the past, therefore, it is anticipated that additional land, above what is projected by this ratio, will be required for future commercial uses.

Regional Commercial Centers

In the past, the Town has contained regional commercial expansion in areas adjacent to the downtown Central Business District (CBD) (e.g., Talbot Town Shopping Center, Easton Shopping Center and Tred Avon Plaza) in order to minimize the distance between these centers and the CBD. The objective has been to concentrate major shopping areas and to preserve the general retail function of the CBD. In recent years as Easton has grown, so has its role as a regional center. Demand for additional commercial activities has greatly increased. Concurrent with this trend has been the evolution of the CBD from a general retail center to a more upscale, tourism-oriented specialty retail center.

Changing dynamics necessitate the need for Easton to expand commercial development in order to fulfill its role as a regional retail, service and office center. Given the limited opportunities in the CBD to provide additional parking and to accommodate additional traffic generated by substantial retail growth, other areas of the Town should now be considered as alternative locations to meet regional commercial development needs. The continued vitality of the CBD remains a priority of the Town. Future development of the CBD is discussed further in a separate plan element.

The Conceptual Development Plan indicates four (4) major areas where future regional commercial development should occur. The first area is on the east side of Rt. 322 north and south of the existing commercial centers on Marlboro Road. Future commercial development in this area would serve to compliment the existing centers and the CBD. The second area proposed for new commercial development is along the northern portion on the eastern side of the Route 50 corridor on the Gannon property recently annexed into the Town. The third area identified for regional commercial development is the planned business/commercial/industrial park on the east side of Elliot Road. The fourth area identified is a portion of the Dudrow Farm at the corner of MD Route 33 and the By-pass (MD Route 322) which is currently outside the corporate limits but could be annexed as services (sewer and water) are extended and the property is developed. Each of these planned Business/Commercial Park Districts presently contains large undeveloped tracts of land. Cluster forms of well-planned commercial development are encouraged in each area as opposed to traditional commercial strip development patterns occurring along most of the Route 50 Corridor through Town. Deeper lot depths and minimum road front lot widths are encouraged to minimize the appearance of commercial strip development along Route 50 (see Conceptual Development Plan Map).

Cluster and other well-planned forms of larger-scale commercial developments are highly encouraged. Advantages of these forms of commercial development include:

- * control of access into the development and more functional internal automobile and pedestrian site circulation patterns;
- * use of landscaping and bufferyards to screen buildings, service areas, loading areas, and parking;
- * coordinated architectural styles, lighting and signage that are harmonious with town character;
- * avoidance of unattractive commercial strip development;
- * more efficient infrastructure construction costs and maintenance (streets, sewer, and water);
- * less impervious surfaces resulting in greater natural resource protection and less storm water runoff from the site; and
- * greater concentrations of businesses and offices in a common center resulting in an easier shopping experience for Town residents.
- * minimized road frontage and the appearance of highway strip development form.

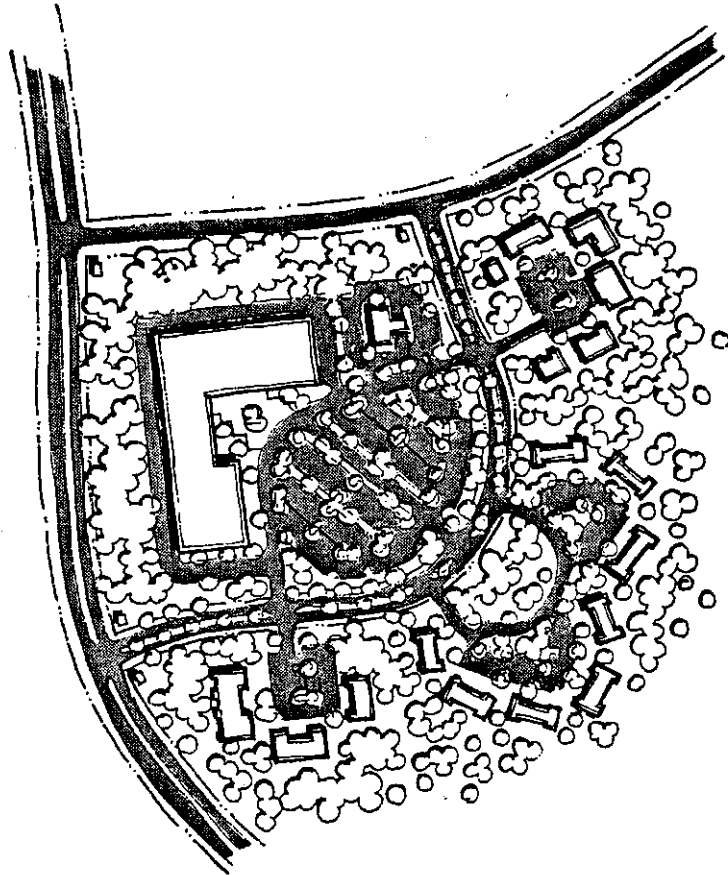
The following illustration (Figure 3) is an example of a well-planned regional commercial center which incorporates the principals outlined above.

Local Commercial Centers

In addition to larger commercial areas which service Town and regional residents, there are a number of smaller neighborhood oriented commercial centers scattered throughout Town. These commercial activities, for the most part, provide necessary services beneficial to neighborhood residents. When these commercial uses are adequately screened from adjacent residential properties and the uses are complimentary to the neighborhood, they serve an important community function. However, these local commercial centers can potentially create problems when they encroach upon the surrounding neighborhood. Frequent problems cited are: increased traffic, unmaintained parking areas, noise, obtrusive lighting, lack of building maintenance, lowered residential property values, and general disruption to the neighborhood. Local commercial centers throughout Town vary in scale and function. Almost all of these centers consist of a mixture of retail and office activities. Future development and/or redevelopment of these areas is an important concern of the Town.

FIGURE 3

Clustered Commercial Development



The larger Local Commercial Center District areas identified include:

- * Dover Street from the downtown to the Park Street vicinity.
- * Pennsylvania Avenue along both sides of the railroad tracks from North Street to Dover Street.
- * The south side of Maryland Avenue.
- * Cremery Lane.
- * Aurora Street from Magnolia Street to Washington Street.
- * Washington Street from Cremery Lane to Glebe Road.
- * Port Street from West Street to Pleasant Alley.

Each of these areas have fairly well-defined edges or borders and are generally adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Physical improvements to upgrade the aesthetic qualities of each of these areas would enhance economic vitality and make the centers more compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Particular focus should be accorded to the Dover Street commercial corridor as this is the largest of the Local Commercial Centers and it represents an important entranceway into Town.

It is important that future development or redevelopment in existing local commercial centers or development of new local commercial development centers be compatible with surrounding land uses. Developments or activities which would result in any of the above sited negative impacts should be discouraged to locate in local neighborhood commercial centers. Any proposed development or redevelopment within the local neighborhood commercial centers should be required to provide adequate off-street parking and landscaped buffers to screen the development from adjacent residential uses. Commercial activities which would generate heavy traffic volumes on local neighborhood streets should also be discouraged.

Route 50 Commercial Development

Traditionally the Rt. 50 corridor through Easton has developed in a piecemeal, strip-commercial form of development which mostly caters to the needs of highway travellers. Some businesses serving local commercial needs have also located on the Route 50 corridor due to the lack of commercially zoned land elsewhere in the Town. In recent years the Town has been able to better influence the quality of development occurring along the central portion of the strip with through access controls, landscaping and signage standards. Control over the recently annexed northern portion of the corridor (Gannon property) remains under the County's jurisdiction during a five (5) year transition period.

Overall the entire Rt. 50 corridor is in need of appearance and traffic access and circulation improvements. Future strip-development should be discouraged and new standards for commercial development which include controlled limited access,

landscaped buffers and parking areas, reverse lot frontage off of service roads, and enhanced sign controls need to be established. Larger scaled commercial developments along the corridor, as elsewhere in the Town, should be clustered into well-planned commercial parks. The large undeveloped land tracts in the northern end of the corridor, on the east side the Route 50, have been identified as locations appropriate for possible regional commercial development expansion.

In addition to enhanced land use and design controls for the corridor the Town should also consider developing a beautification plan for the corridor which could include; planting of street trees and landscaped areas, development of landscaped entranceway structures and signage at the north and south ends of the corridor and at Dover and Goldsborough streets. Adoption of more restrictive sign standards for both on-premise and off-premise signs along the corridor would greatly enhance the appearance of the area for residents and tourists alike. Better access controls onto Rt. 50 would alleviate many traffic congestion problems, especially during the summer months. Particular attention should be accorded to alleviating safety problems associated with the Old Chapel Road/Route 50 intersection. The development of a new signalized intersection south of Old Chapel Road would eliminate problems with the existing intersection and would also assist in providing safe access to future commercial development on the east side of Route 50.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The following are the Town's policies in regard to commercial development:

- 4.13 All commercial development should be in conformance with the Conceptual Development Plan and all Town ordinances and regulations.
- 4.14 Larger-scale, regional commercial developments should occur as well-planned commercial parks.
- 4.15 Development and/or redevelopment of local neighborhood commercial centers should be compatible with existing residential areas, and physical improvements to enhance the aesthetic qualities of Local Commercial Centers should also be undertaken, with particular focus accorded to the Dover Street commercial corridor.
- 4.16 Strip commercial development should be discouraged along the Route 50 corridor and, in general, development standards for the corridor should be improved in order to enhance corridor appearance and traffic circulation.
- 4.17 The Town should undertake a beautification program for the entire Route 50 corridor which includes provision of more street trees and landscaping, development of Town entranceways, and enhanced sign controls.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

If Easton is to continue to experience diversified economic development, it is important that certain appropriate land areas be set aside for light or select industrial development. These industrial park sites are identified on the Conceptual

Development Plan Map. One area suitable for industrial expansion is the vicinity of the Airport Industrial Park. There is suitable and adequate land for park expansion west of Route 322. Another area suitable for industrial expansion is the Clifton Industrial Park east of Route 50. There is enough land available in and adjacent to each of these existing industrial parks to accommodate future industrial development. In addition, both areas pose no serious environmental threats and both are adequately buffered from residential areas. Each of the parks is already serviced with roads, water and sewer. Each park also has ready access to Rt. 50 via a signalized intersection.

Development standards for existing and future industrial parks should be adequate to control excessive noise, dust, and vibration impacts which could occur. Cluster development concepts can also be used in the design of industrial parks to provide efficient internal circulation systems and generally improve the appearance of these areas. Bufferyards and landscaping can be used to screen the park from nearby residential areas. Industrial lands directly adjacent to the airport should be reserved for those businesses and activities that are airport related and which will not view airport activities as nuisance or create an impediment to air service and facilities expansion.

Almost all of Easton's industry is currently located within one of the industrial parks. There are a few industries remaining in the downtown area along the railroad right-of-way. These industries are generally located in, what are now, residential neighborhoods. Redevelopment of these areas to more residentially compatible uses should be considered on a case by case basis, particularly where existing structures have been abandoned or are in dilapidated or deteriorating condition. In many instances industrial uses in these areas should not be continued, however, where industrial development is still deemed appropriate to occur it should be limited to small and light industrial activities not subject to major on-site expansion.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policies for the development of industrial lands are as follows:

- 4.18 All light or select industrial development should be in conformance with the Conceptual Development Plan and all Town ordinance and regulations.**
- 4.19 Future light or select industrial development should be encouraged to locate in one of the existing industrial parks.**
- 4.20 Lands adjacent to the airport should be reserved for airport related industrial uses.**
- 4.21 Existing industrial development along the railroad right-of-way in the Town should be redeveloped to more residentially compatible uses in cases where the structure is dilapidated or deteriorating and there are conflicts with the surrounding neighborhood.**

AGRICULTURE

The remaining farmlands within the Town, including the Adkins farm fronting on the south fork of the Tred Avon River and Papermill Pond, are areas where future development is proposed or likely to occur in the near future. Extreme development pressures on these large undeveloped parcels combined with a declining farm economy dictates the rapid transformation of the Town's farmlands for development purposes. For these reasons, the plan contains no specific policies relating to agricultural land use.

OPEN SPACE AND INSTITUTIONAL LAND USES

Open space development throughout the Town is discussed in detail in the Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan Element. Policies for open space provisions are also outlined in that section of the Plan. In general, the intent of these policies is to ensure that usable open spaces are incorporated in the development of all types of future land uses when appropriate. In addition to open spaces being created within individual developments, the Plan also envisions the creation of a Town-wide system of community open spaces in order to protect and buffer fragile natural resources and scenic areas (e.g. stream valleys, wooded areas, wetlands and the Town's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area).

Institutional land uses (e.g. schools, public buildings, churches, cemeteries, etc.) can continue to occur as long as they are compatible with existing surrounding land uses, and they conform to the Town Zoning Ordinance, and they do not have adverse impacts on the transportation system, increase noise levels nor depreciate property values. Schools and public buildings facilities are discussed in the Community Facilities Plan Element.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Easton Comprehensive Plan establishes a general development policy for addressing future growth and expansion issues. Although not all aspects of the Plan can be illustrated in graphic form, land use concepts and related elements are generally illustrated on the Conceptual Development Plan. While designed to guide future development by establishing general areas where various land uses should occur, the Conceptual Development Plan recognizes that conditions may change over time and that limitations of specific sites to accommodate planned uses may cause their expansion, contraction or the need to shift from locations generally shown to other areas of the Town. It is principally for this reason that the Comprehensive Development Plan should be periodically updated as circumstances warrant.

Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance recommended herein should be prepared to assist in implementing the Conceptual Development Plan. All zoning districts should be in general conformance with Conceptual Development Plan Map and should specifically designate uses of land, permitted intensities of development and development standards.

The Conceptual Development Plan illustrates the general development pattern of Easton and the spatial distribution of future activities. Likewise it suggests areas where future growth will require services. This map should serve as a guide to orchestrate the future pattern of development of Easton, Maryland and its surrounding lands to the year 2010. Staging of public improvements to service future development should be in recognition of this ultimate pattern. Given the market dynamics and societal value changes which can be anticipated over time it should be reviewed, evaluated and revised periodically (every 5 years) to assure it is realistic and adequately serves the present and future residents of the community.

Explanations of the various land use classifications illustrated on the Conceptual Development Plan Map (contained in the back of this document) are as follows:

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Town Scale Residential District:

Areas where future residential development patterns, forms and densities should be established by existing neighborhoods within the Town core as defined by Rt. 50 to the east and Rt. 322 to the west. The character of existing neighborhoods will be primarily responsible for shaping the character of new residential in-fill development and redevelopment. Both single-family and multi-family housing developments are encouraged dependent upon the proposed development's compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Multi-family housing proposals should continue to be reviewed and approved through the special exception process. The R-7A and R-10A zoning classifications are generally appropriate for this area. Zoning provisions to allow planned unit developments and cluster developments should be developed for larger tracts in undeveloped Town scale residential areas.

Mixed Residential District:

Areas outside of the Town Core where most future residential development will occur should be an equitable mix of single-family and multi-family housing developments. A variety of development types and densities should be encouraged provided adequate development standards and guidelines are incorporated which ensure compatibility between developments. The Mixed Residential District should be a suburban transition area from urban to rural development. Areas adjacent to the Town Core should generally be developed at higher suburban densities, with densities decreasing the farther away from Town the development is proposed. Higher densities closer to Town will allow for greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of sewer and water services. Lower densities at the Town fringes will soften the transition from higher densities near the Town Core to surrounding rural County areas.

The specific pattern and density of residential development in this district should be established on a tract by tract basis during a comprehensive rezoning process. Besides proximity to the Town Core, other important criteria for determining the pattern and density appropriate for different areas within the district are: the pattern and density of adjacent development; the size of the

development tract; and the presence of sensitive natural resource features which should be preserved. Future residential development density and pattern should be compatible with existing adjacent neighborhoods. Smaller parcels, especially those with resource constraints, (e.g. stream valleys, woodlands, steep slopes, plant and wildlife habitat, etc.) should be required to cluster development on the site in order to minimize disturbance to sensitive natural features. In general, future residential development in this district should be designed and built to be harmonious with the natural features of the land.

Development on lands adjacent to state routes which serve as gateways to Easton should be well-setback and buffered from the transportation corridors for aesthetic purposes and controlled with respect to access to preserve highway traffic capacity.

Minimum residential lot sizes and zoning district densities in the Mixed Residential District should be evaluated and adjusted to establish development densities and patterns which take into account the above considerations. Multi-family residential development should continue to be reviewed and approved through site plan review and Special Exception processes. Zoning provisions to allow planned unit developments and cluster developments should be developed for larger undeveloped tracts in Mixed Residential areas.

Residential/Office District:

Areas where a mixture of special types of residential development are integrated with related office development (e.g. elderly housing and medical services). Residential/Office Districts identified include areas along Bay Street, Idlewilde Avenue, and Dutchman's Lane west of Route 50. Future development in these areas could be in the form of either residential or office use provided the correct zoning is in place and the proposed development is compatible with existing development.

All future residential development in and adjacent to the Town should be of a density which efficiently allows for the extension of public water and sewer systems. Future residential development, regardless of which plan district it occurs in, should be required to provide improvements and amenities characteristic of existing residential neighborhoods in the Town.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS:

Areas appropriate for regional, local neighborhood, highway-oriented, and Central Business District commercial development which includes retail/wholesale, office and service businesses.

Business/Commercial Park District:

Larger areas identified as appropriate for the expansion of commercial activities, predominantly serving regional needs, in the form of well-planned and heavily buffered commercial parks as opposed to traditional forms of strip-

commercial development. Business/Commercial Parks should incorporate standards for; buffering and landscaping, access control, efficient internal automobile and pedestrian circulation, parking, lot depth to width ratios which encourage minimal road frontage, signage, and other site amenities to enhance efficiency and aesthetic appeal. Business/Commercial Park District designations are identified for the area immediately south and north of the Tred Avon Shopping Center on the east side of Route 322; the northern end of the Route 50 corridor on the east side of Route 50; along the east side of Elliot Road; west of Route 322 at the Route 322 and Route 33 intersection opposite Marlboro Road; and in other select locations of Town.

Local Commercial Center District:

Well-defined areas of smaller concentrations of existing commercial uses distributed throughout Town which primarily serve local Town resident and neighborhood commercial needs. Many of these areas are in need of physical improvements to enhance economic vitality and aesthetic qualities. Future expansion or redevelopment of Local Commercial Center Districts should be carefully reviewed to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Dover Street corridor is the Local Commercial Center District most in need of physical improvements and beautification due to its large size and its function as a major entranceway into Town.

Route 50 Commercial District:

Areas along the Route 50 corridor already developed as strip-commercial. As this area redevelops or is improved through the implementation of a proposed Route 50 Corridor Improvement Plan, provisions should be made to control access and enhance landscaping and signage standards. Improvements to the existing form and quality of development along the Route 50 Corridor would do much to alleviate current traffic problems and enhance the Corridor's visual appearance.

Central Business District:

The core downtown area expected to continue to be dominated by government, office and specialty retail activities. Development which is harmonious with the historic character and pedestrian orientation of the downtown should be encouraged along with a continuing program of streetscape and traffic circulation improvements. The creation of additional parking areas on the perimeter of the CBD should occur. Although irregularly shaped with non-distinct edges, the CBD is generally defined by West Street to the west, Bay Street and the Talbot Town Shopping Center to the north, Harrison Street to the east, and South Street to the South.

INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT:

Larger areas already dominated by institutional development (e.g. schools, churches, cemeteries, social clubs, and associated play fields). Institutional land uses should also be allowed in appropriate locations in other land use classification districts provided the proposed use is compatible with surrounding development and is in conformance with the Town Zoning Ordinance.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS:

Areas suitable for expansion and future development of "light or select" industries with development standards that adequately control excessive noise, dust, vibration and visual impacts. Development of well-planned and adequately screened and buffered industrial parks is encouraged. Industrial lands adjacent to the airport should be reserved for activities that are airport related and will not create an impediment to air service and facilities expansion.

REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

Areas with potential to be redeveloped with the same use or a more appropriate use for the site. Easton Point has long been under-utilized given the areas waterfront attraction and potential. Existing development on Easton point should be considered in the formulation of any redevelopment plans for the area. A mix of additional residential and waterfront oriented commercial development may be appropriate for the area. Some of the Industrial Districts along the railroad tracks within the core area of the Town have also been identified as appropriate for redevelopment in order to provide property owners with greater flexibility to redevelop their properties. The Redevelopment Districts are identified as overlay districts to other underlying Plan districts.

PARKS/OPEN SPACE/NATURAL BUFFERS DISTRICT:

Larger areas of open space, existing and proposed park development, natural buffer areas along Rt. 322, Rt. 50 and other major Town roads, and wetlands protected by the Town's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program. Open space, park development, and the provision of natural buffers should be encouraged throughout all areas of the Town where stream valleys, wooded areas, historical sites and other environmental and cultural/historically sensitive features are present.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PLAN ELEMENT

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PLAN ELEMENT

HOUSING

The quality of Easton's neighborhoods is determined by the cumulative impact of the Town's housing supply and living environment. Since major community goals are to improve the quality of life and to promote the availability and affordability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing for all Town residents, housing ranks as an important local concern.

The Town has, in the past, actively acquired land and financed construction of affordable housing for home ownership for low-to-moderate income families and is continuing to do so. The Easton Housing Authority is the major quasi-public agency providing housing for the Town's low income residents. There is currently a waiting list of over 300 families and individual families for occupation of the 65 low income rental units managed by the Housing Authority. This is an indication of the extreme severity of the housing affordability and availability problem in the Town and resultant problems of substandard and dilapidated housing in some areas. The availability and affordability of land within the Town is the major constraint to increased development of low and moderate income housing by the Housing Authority, Town and private developers. The lack of Federal money for low and moderate income housing assistance programs is another major problem.

Development of a coordinated community-wide effort to improve and protect the Town's housing supply and living environment is necessary. Future proposals and programs to improve the quality of housing in Easton can be assured of continuity of purpose when related to well-defined community objectives and policies. Housing objectives and policies are related to the rehabilitation and improvement of the Town's substandard housing units and the redevelopment of dilapidated units which are beyond repair and represent a health and safety risk. There is also concern for assuring that the housing needs of the Town's elderly are provided for.

Easton is the commercial, governmental, employment and housing center for Talbot County. Highly restrictive growth and development controls in the County along with a lack of county-wide sewer and water services has resulted in the concentration of higher density (more affordable) housing almost exclusively within the Town of Easton. In recent years the Town has experienced an increase of multi-family residential development. The Town is concerned that both the Town and County share equitably in the responsibility for assuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the region to meet the needs of the areas low to moderate income families since housing is an issue that impacts both jurisdictions.

Important factors to be considered in forming Town policy towards the public function of housing in the Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Housing is a durable, physical product in a neighborhood setting.
2. Housing is a major user of the Town's land (37% of all developed Town land).

3. Housing is a generator of local public facilities and services.
4. Housing is the object of local real estate taxes.
5. Housing is a major influence on the Town's physical and social environment.
6. Housing is an essential requirement for continued economic development.
7. Housing construction is a major source of employment.
8. Housing is a major investment or expenditure for individual families.
9. Housing is a major investment for the private financial community.
10. Housing is a major ingredient in family satisfaction or dissatisfaction and in a community's sense of well-being.

HOUSING POLICIES

Given the importance of housing as a component of Easton's future growth and development, the following policies are established:

- 5.1 The Town, with the assistance of the County, should undertake the preparation of a detailed Housing Plan. Basic elements of the Plan should include;
 - a. The identification of specific housing problems existing within the Town, and the identification of the number of units needed, by type, size, and various income levels.
 - b. A review of the services needed, and programs available, to assist low income residents in attaining home ownership.
 - c. The identification of major obstructions which limit the availability of housing to low income residents, which may include the lack affordable land and the lack of Federal and State funding assistance.
 - d. Identification of major actions which are necessary to provide housing for local residents.
 - e. The coordination of all federal, state, county, and town efforts (non-profit, public, and private) in providing housing.
- 5.2 The Town should develop and adopt a local "Livability Code" designed after the State's model code to improve substandard rental housing conditions in the Town, and assist rental property owners who are not in compliance with the Town's Liveability Code (once adopted) to apply for the Liveability Code Rehabilitation Program. This State program provides

low interest home improvement loans to rental property owners so they can make improvements to bring units into compliance with the Code.

- 5.3 The Town should continue support for Easton Housing Authority activities in providing housing for low and moderate income residents.
- 5.4 The Town should continue to provide lands zoned for higher density residential developments in order to encourage the continued construction of less expensive housing forms including planned unit developments and cluster development as described in the Land Use Plan Element.
- 5.5 The Town should continue to encourage the development of specialized housing for the elderly in locations near to Town services and commercial centers.
- 5.6 The Town should continue to participate in the State Community Development Administration Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for housing rehabilitation projects.
- 5.7 The Town should encourage residents and rental property owners to participate in the State Community Development Administration, Home and Energy Loan Program. This program provides below market interest rate loans for home energy efficiency improvements including, insulation, caulking, storm windows and doors, etc.
- 5.8 The Town should encourage residents and rental property owners to participate in the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program provides below market interest rate loans for a broad range of general home improvements including additions.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Beyond individual housing units and residential subdivisions, the most basic and important physical and social cornerstones of the Town are its neighborhoods. These sometimes well-defined and sometimes not so well-defined sub-areas of Easton are the centers of community life in the Town. Families and individuals have substantial investments in their neighborhoods, both in terms of homes and a chosen living environment. Maintaining and improving the stability of Easton's neighborhoods is a primary concern for all Town Residents.

Major physical factors affecting the stability of the Town's residential neighborhoods include:

- * its location in relationship to adjacent land uses (industrial, commercial, institutional, residential);
- * the age and condition of the neighborhood's houses;
- * the function and condition of roads and streets in the neighborhood;

- * the condition of the neighborhood's utility systems (e.g. water, sewer, storm drainage, electricity, gas, solid waste);
- * the presence or lack of improvements and amenities such as curb and gutter, stormwater drainage, sidewalks, street lighting, trees and landscaping; and
- * the presence or lack of community open spaces, natural areas, parks and playgrounds.

Besides physical improvements, there are also many social and economic forces affecting the stability and vitality of Easton's neighborhoods including the age and income of neighborhood residents and the levels of home ownership versus absentee ownership of rental properties. These dynamics, however, are often outside of the influence of the Comprehensive Development Plan and are therefore not addressed.

Each of Easton's many residential neighborhoods has its own specific needs and objectives for physical improvements. These needs range from major street repair to small-scale alley and vacant lot clean up projects. The Town, various local neighborhood groups and community service organizations, and individual residents all share responsibility for the continued maintenance and improvement of the Town's neighborhoods. The policies outlined below represent general town-wide efforts which can be made or initiated to preserve and improve neighborhood quality of life in all areas of the Town.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT POLICIES

- 5.9 The Town should prohibit the encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into existing residential neighborhoods.
- 5.10 Local Commercial Center streetscapes should be improved and enhanced to be more compatible and complimentary with adjacent neighborhoods.
- 5.11 The Town should carefully review all proposed conversions of existing single-family homes to multi-family units, offices or commercial uses to ensure that the surrounding neighborhood is not negatively impacted.
- 5.12 The Town should acquire and develop additional neighborhood parks, open spaces, and recreation areas throughout Town where needed as opportunities are present.
- 5.13 When new residential, commercial or industrial developments are proposed adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods the Town should require the developer to provide adequate landscaping and screening to buffer the existing neighborhood.
- 5.14 New residential development within a neighborhood (infill development) should be harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood in regards to design, density, required improvements and amenities.

- 5.15 In neighborhoods where substandard or deteriorating housing exists, The Town should encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of units in need of repair.**
- 5.16 The Town should encourage the renovation, restoration and adaptive reuse of buildings of architectural and historic significance within all neighborhoods.**
- 5.17 The Town should consider the traffic impacts on local neighborhood streets when reviewing proposals for new development in the vicinity which will affect the level of traffic on local and collector streets.**
- 5.18 The Town should encourage and support the neighborhood improvement efforts of local neighborhood groups and community service organizations. For example the Town could initiate an "Adopt-a-Spot" program whereby various community groups and service organizations would be responsible for the maintenance, improvement and beautification of different public places throughout Town and at the end of each year the Town could hold a presentation to publicize, recognize and reward the efforts of those groups that did the best job.**
- 5.19 Specific, large-scale neighborhood improvement projects (e.g. sewer, water, roads, sidewalks repair, etc) should be considered and prioritized as part of the formulation of a six (6) year and an annual Capital Improvements Program.**

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District (CBD) is the focal point of community activity in Easton. The CBD currently serves as a government, office, financial and specialty retail center. The basic identity of downtown Easton has gone through a transition in recent years. Commercial activities in the CBD are going through a change from general base retail services to smaller, upscale, tourism-oriented specialty retail shops. The historic character of the CBD has made it an attractive location for specialty retail functions oriented towards the area's Chesapeake Bay heritage and the region's prominence as a waterfowl sporting center. The majority of general commercial retail activity which serves Easton and Talbot County residents has, over the years, moved from the CBD to outlying, adjacent shopping centers. The Talbot County Courthouse and the Annex Buildings, the Easton Town Hall, Police Station, and the Talbot County Public Library are all located in the CBD creating a government center which attracts numerous professional offices (e.g., real estate, financial services, legal) to locate nearby.

The CBD is currently an extremely viable center with a great deal of pedestrian activity. Preservation of the livelihood of Easton's CBD is a major goal of the Plan. This preservation can be accomplished by capitalizing on opportunities created by the CBD's unique character and imagery, strong office and specialty retail markets, and many unique historic structures.

The Central Business District of Easton has remained a thriving and vital part of Easton despite trends of economic decline evidenced in many downtown areas of small Eastern Shore towns over recent decades. Many of the recommendations put forward in the 1974 plan for street improvements, parking, beautification etc. have been implemented and positive results are evident. The following policies are designed to further improve and enhance the economic function and aesthetic qualities of the CBD during the plan period.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT POLICIES

- 6.1 The Town should consider and explore the feasibility of realigning North Harrison Street to intersect Washington Street at Bay Street and consideration should be given to closing off the existing intersection of North Harrison and Washington which is currently not signalized and creates a multitude of congestion and turning problems. This improvement would assist to solve a general problem pervasive in the CBD, which is the movement of east-west through traffic and resultant congestion.
- 6.2 Perimeter parking areas around the CBD should continue to be improved by the Town to provide more off-street parking. The demand for additional parking in the CBD is growing and opportunities for new parking areas within the CBD are limited. The provision of adequate parking is essential to the vitality of commercial and office activities in the CBD. Creation of

a multi-story parking garage should be considered in the CBD to alleviate parking inadequacies.

- 6.3 Beautification of the CBD and ongoing streetscape improvements should be continued. The presence of street trees, brick sidewalk extensions, reduction of overhead utility wires and traffic signals, and other improvements have greatly enhanced the historic character of the CBD. Other recommended improvements which would enhance the pedestrian atmosphere of the CBD include: placement of thematic street lighting, street furniture in the form of additional waste receptacles seating areas and information kiosk's along sidewalks and in other pedestrian places throughout the CBD.
- 6.4 The Town should encourage continued development of a government mall for administration purposes and associated office development (only: Courthouse, Library, Police Station) within the CBD on the block bounded by West Street, Federal Street, Dover Street and Hammond Street.
- 6.5 The Town should continue to support the efforts of the Easton Downtown Merchants Association and Historic Easton Inc. to maintain and improve the unique character and economic vitality of the CBD.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Preservation is recognized as being a well balanced program of research, evaluation, protection, and restoration of structures or areas having significant local or national historic interest. For a number of years, citizens of the Easton area have been actively concerned about historic preservation. Enhanced by wide-spread citizen interest, local efforts to create a historic and picturesque community atmosphere are notable.

No planning program could be developed for Easton without recognizing the economic value and visual impact of the sizeable number of historic structures, or without recognizing the efforts and achievements accomplished by local citizens in Historic Preservation. Past historic preservation efforts are a large part of the success of the Town's CBD specialty retailing success. The efforts of Historic Easton, Inc. both in establishing the Town's historic district and in undertaking special projects to restore architecturally and historically significant structures are important contributions to the community effort to protect heritage resources.

The Historic Preservation program in Easton recognizes that a balance between the vital economic interests of the Town and historic preservation efforts must be established and maintained. The Town's specialized commercial, governmental and office functions are interrelated with the general appearance and image of the area, which are in turn enhanced by historic structures. By recognizing the interrelationships which exist, the community will be better able to view future development proposals with a proper perspective.

Section 512 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance establishes regulations and procedures necessary to preserve the historic structures and character of Easton through the creation of two (2) Historic Zoning Districts and the designation of

individual historic landmarks. These Historic Districts are considered "overlay zones", meaning that the regulations and procedures associated with the Historic District need to be considered in conjunction with the underlying zoning district provisions.

The purpose of the historic ordinance district is to:

- * Safeguard the heritage of Easton by preserving the district or districts therein which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history;
- * stabilize and improve property values;
- * foster civic beauty;
- * strengthen the local economy; and
- * promote the use and preservation of Historic Districts for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the residents of Easton and Talbot County.

There are two (2) Historic District zones in Easton. The first covers the area of the Third Haven Meeting House and is identified as "Meeting House District". The second district consists of the land which constitutes basically the original part of Easton and is identified as the "Old Easton District". Both of these areas are identified on the Historic Districts and Sites Map contained in this section. In addition there are scattered individual properties and structures deemed to be of historical or architectural significance which are subject to the provisions of the Historic District overlay zone. A list of Historic Properties located outside of the two (2) Historic Districts includes:

1. Spence House
2. Mt. Pleasant
3. St. Aubins
4. Ending of Controversy
5. Langsdale House
6. Parris House
7. Asbury Methodist Church
8. Old Children's Home
9. Spring Hill Cemetery
10. Oak Hill House

The locations of the properties identified above are shown on the Historic Districts and Sites Map. A number of historic properties within the Town are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A Historic District Commission has been appointed by the Mayor and Town Council to nominate and evaluate properties for inclusion in the Historic District Overlay Zone. The Commission also reviews permits for the construction of, or additions to, or alteration, repair, moving or demolition of a structure, or the construction of any structure in the gardens and grounds appurtenant to any existing structures within the district. If any changes are involved which would affect or obscure or obstruct the exterior structural appearance of a structures visible from an adjacent public way, the person involved needs to file an application with the Commission through the Town Clerk to build, alter, repair, move, demolish or make the addition. The Commission only considers modifications to exterior features of a structure.

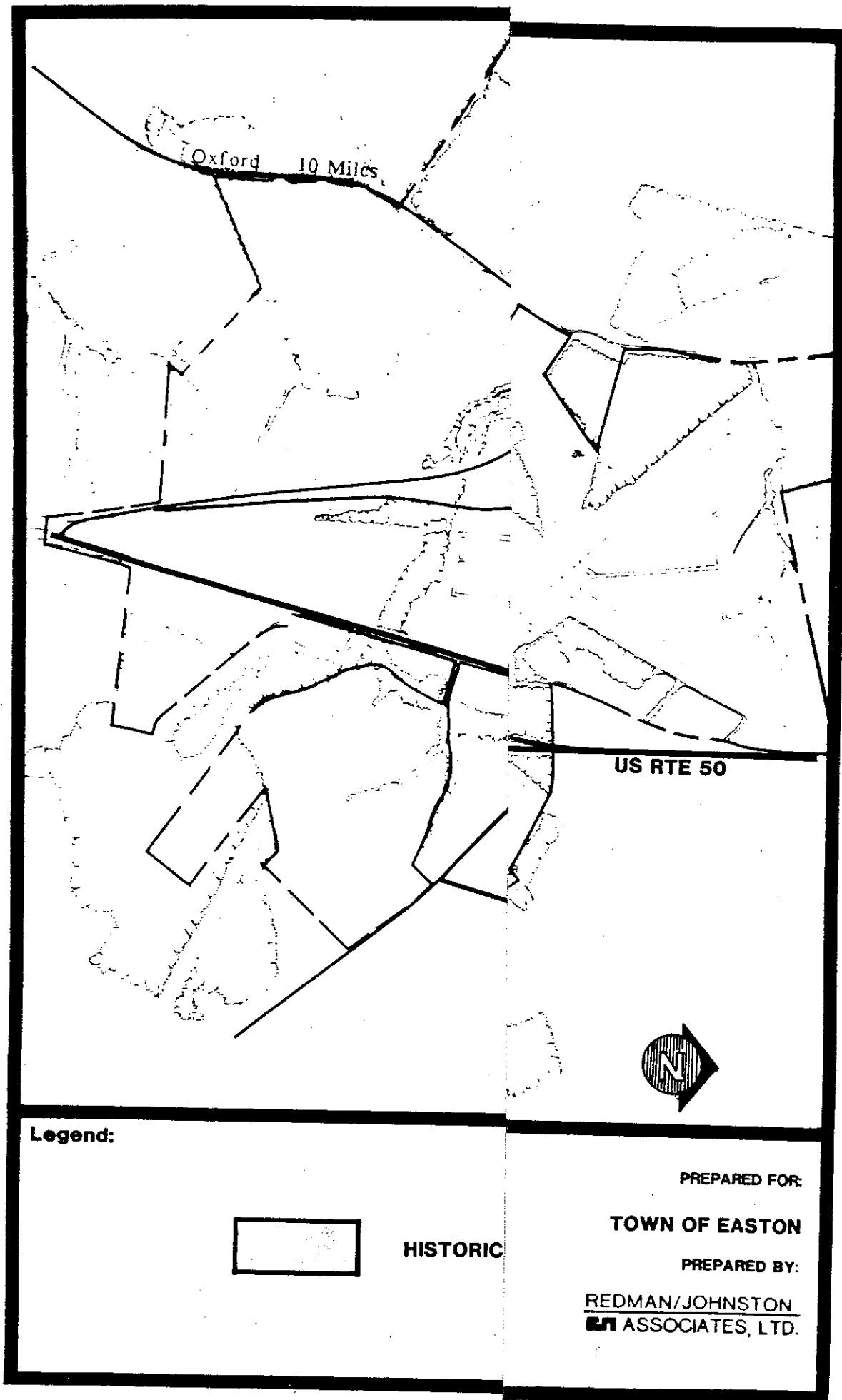
Currently the Town's Historic District Ordinance only has jurisdiction over modifications and alterations to the exteriors of existing buildings. Many now believe that in order to truly maintain the historic character within the District the ordinance should regulate new construction and development as well as existing. Without provisions regulating the exterior appearance of new buildings within the District, it is conceivable that a new commercial structure could be built on a vacant or redeveloped lot in the CBD which would be quite appropriate along Rt.50 but would be extremely out of place downtown. The result would be a loss of harmonious character in the downtown area.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES

The following are Town policies regarding Historic Preservation.

- 6.7 The Town should continue to support and foster historic preservation efforts which are of benefit to the Community.
- 6.8 The Town should provide the Historic District Commission the services of an architect to assist them in their technical review of proposed development and restoration to properties within the Historic Districts.
- 6.9 Technical design guidelines and standards should be developed with input from local property owners and businesses, for existing and new development in the Town's Historic District and the Historic District Ordinance should be amended to include jurisdiction over new construction in the District.
- 6.10 The Town should continue to support the historic property restoration and renovation efforts of Historic Easton Inc. and Town property owners.
- 6.11 The Historic District Commission should undertake a periodic update and listing of architecturally and historically significant structures in the Town.

HISTORIC DISTRICT & SITES



PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN ELEMENT

PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN ELEMENT

The careful location of parks and open space areas and preservation of the Town's natural resources as a complement to existing development can be a useful tool in guiding the Town's development into a logical, orderly and environmentally sensitive pattern. In addition to recreational and aesthetic benefits, open spaces provide a framework for various land uses. Properly located, they become boundaries and buffers between conflicting uses of land and a nucleus for building neighborhood areas. Natural features can be preserved as valuable scenic and environmental attributes of the Town.

Several basic principles are used to encourage the maximum use of Parks and Open Spaces. Recreational facilities should be located near residential neighborhoods. Future residential, commercial and industrial development should require open spaces as part of the site plan approval procedure to provide natural buffers between conflicting land uses and to increase the protective area adjacent to features such as watersheds, streams, and shorelines. To meet the needs of the community, areas for Parks and Open Spaces should be consistent with population projections and the increasing demand for recreational facilities.

The Easton Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Resources Element is directed towards the preservation of natural stream valleys throughout the Town and adjoining County areas. These areas provide a natural watershed system and are potential recreational areas which can be used to buffer incompatible land uses. The Plan Element stresses preserving these stream valleys before they are developed or before they become too expensive to acquire. The valleys make a natural location for neighborhood parks which serve adjoining residential areas.

Surface mining of mineral resources does not take place within the Town of Easton. Surface Mining is defined as: 1) the breaking of the surface soil in order to extract or remove minerals; 2) any activity or process constituting all or part of a process for the extraction or removal of minerals; and/or 3) the extraction of sand, gravel, rock, stone, earth or fill from borrow pits for highway construction purposes or other public facilities. No potential mineral resources have been identified within Easton. It is the Town's intention to prohibit surface mining activities within the corporate limits.

There are currently no public facilities for the offloading of finfish and shellfish within the Town of Easton due to the Town's limited waterfront access. If in the future, Easton Point is annexed, there would be opportunity for this type of activity at the public landing facility on the Tred Avon River.

CHESAPEAKE BAY CRITICAL AREA PROGRAM AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Town has recently prepared a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program in accordance with the Maryland Critical Area Legislation which roughly affects all land within 1,000 feet of the Bay and its tidal tributaries shorelines. The three primary goals of the Town's Program are:

1. to minimize adverse impacts on water quality that result from high nutrient loadings in runoff from surrounding lands or from pollutants that are discharged from structures;
2. to conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats; and
3. to establish land use policies for development locating within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area that accommodate growth and also address the fact that, even if pollution is controlled, the number, movement, and activities of persons in that area can create environmental impacts.

The Town has established the following general goals to guide the creation of specific regulations for the designated development areas in the Critical Area.

1. To direct future intense development to locations outside the Town's Critical Area. When future intense development activities are proposed in the Critical Area they shall be accommodated exclusively in the Intensely Developed Areas as mapped.
2. To reserve Resource Conservation Areas for compatible uses including but not limited to, fisheries, resource utilization activities (e.g., park land or passive recreation) and for achieving habitat protection objectives.
3. To exclude the following types of development activities due to their adverse impact on habitats and water quality, unless it has been demonstrated that the activity will create a net improvement in water quality to the adjacent body of water:
 - * Non-maritime heavy industry.
 - * Transportation facilities.
 - * Sludge handling, storage and disposal facilities, other than those associated with wastewater treatment facilities.
4. To exclude the following types of development from the Critical Area unless no environmentally acceptable alternative exists outside the Critical Area, and these development activities or facilities are needed in order to correct an existing water quality of wastewater management problem:
 - * Solid or hazardous waste collection or disposal facilities.
 - * Sanitary landfills.

5. To develop policies and programs necessary to achieve local program objectives for Intensely Developed Areas, Limited Development areas and Resource Conservation Areas identified within the Easton Critical Area.
6. To assure those development and redevelopment activities which are permitted to occur within portions of the Town's Critical Area and/or Critical Area Buffer are developed in a manner consistent with appropriate Local program elements to achieve water quality and habitat resource protection benefits.

The Town's Critical Area basically consists of a 1,000 foot strip adjacent to the Tred Avon River's North and South Forks and Papermill Pond. Approximately 336 acres of the Town fall within the Critical Area. This area represents the majority of environmentally sensitive land remaining undeveloped within the Town's Limits. The Critical Area Program should be referenced for further discussion of resource protection plans, criteria and regulations affecting the Town's shorefront areas.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION POLICIES

Natural Resource Protection Policies for the Town are as follows:

- 7.1 The Town should implement its local Critical Area Program.
- 7.2 Development in the Town's stream valleys and other sensitive natural areas including wetlands and areas of significant plant and wildlife habitat should be prohibited.
- 7.3 When development does have negative impacts on the natural environment of the Town, mitigation measures or fees-in-lieu should be required.
- 7.4 Clearing of the Town's remaining wooded lands for development should be selective, and to the extent possible, minimized.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

While both the Town of Easton and Talbot County each have their own Parks and Recreation programs, in reality the two systems should function as a single entity. Since Easton is the major population and activity center in the County, there is a great deal of use of Town facilities by County residents and visa versa.

Existing park and open space areas are generally perceived to be fairly adequate for the needs of Town residents, with some exceptions. As vacant lands within the Town continue to be developed, it becomes increasingly important for potential park and open space areas to be acquired and developed. A larger park facility is needed in the northern end of the Town. A 24 acre site north of Old Chapel Road is currently being considered by the Town and County to be developed as a multi-facility park.

The abandoned State owned railroad right-of-way running north and south through the center of Town presents a unique opportunity for development of a landscaped greenway corridor complete with walking/jogging and biking trails. The greenway corridor could extend from the proposed new park facility north of Old Chapel Road south to the end of Walnut Avenue and could potentially link into Idlewilde Park to form a unified Town Park system. This facility would be accessible to many of the Town's residents and serve as a unique attraction to visitors.

Another major park/open space proposal is for the narrow strip of land between Papermill Park and Rt. 322 to be acquired and developed as a passive park with nature walks and an elevated boardwalk extending along the pond and over wetlands. This proposal would be compatible with the Town's Critical Area Program objectives for the area. Natural and landscaped bufferyards should be left remaining along both sides of the Easton By-pass and along undeveloped portions of the Route 50 corridor. Funding for all of these proposals could be obtained through Maryland's Program Open Space, County and Town funds, private and corporate donations, mandatory dedication and fees-in-lieu of mandatory dedication and mitigation fees-in-lieu from developments which disturb sensitive environments.

Existing Town parks and public open spaces are identified in Table 7. Future park and open space proposals are illustrated on the Parks and Open Space Map and the Conceptual Development Plan Map.

In addition to the areas listed above there are several other County owned park and open space areas located near Town (e.g., Hog Neck Public Golf Course, the Talbot County Community Center and the Easton Point public landing).

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

The Plan recognizes that as the Town continues to grow the parks and open space system will need to be improved and expanded. Two areas of the Town seen as particularly lacking in parks and open spaces are the north end of town and waterfront areas. Town Policies are as follows:

- 7.5 The Town should work with the County to develop a regional park on the 24 acre site in the triangle formed by the railroad to the west, Route 50 to the east and Old Chapel road to the south. Plans prepared by the Town currently include a 3 field complex tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas and a jogging/bike path.
- 7.6 The Town should work with the State Rail Administration to develop a greenway corridor complete with landscaping and jogging and biking trails to run the length of the abandoned rail right-of-way through Town. The proposed northern regional park described above would serve as the northern anchor for the corridor park.
- 7.7 The Town should acquire and develop the narrow strip of land between Papermill Pond and Easton Parkway south of Easton Point as a passive open space area with elevated boardwalks and walking trails overlooking the wetlands and the pond. This proposal would be compatible with the intent of the Critical Area Program and would provide the Town with

much needed improved waterfront access. The strip of land is too narrow for development.

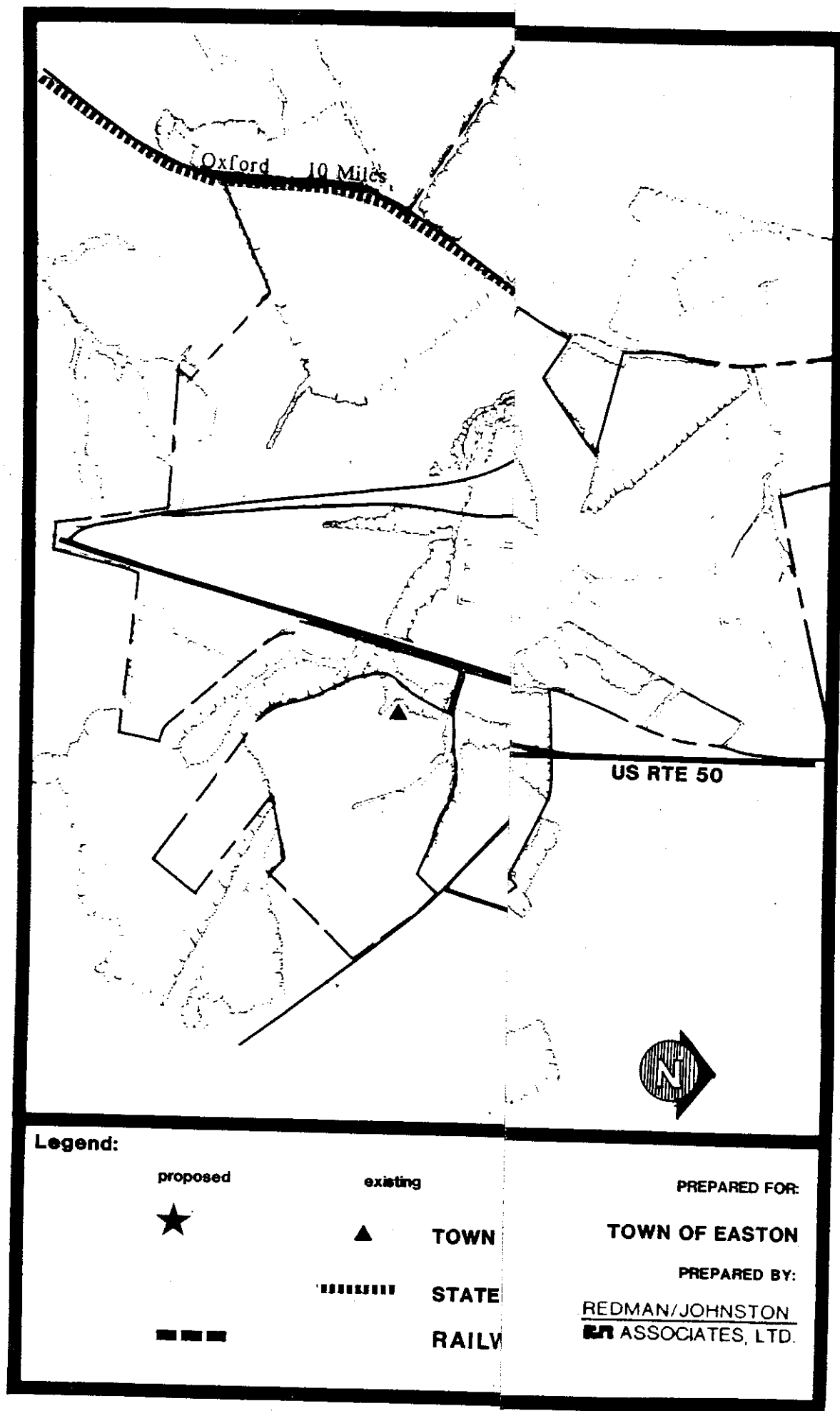
- 7.8 The Town should maintain Idlewilde Park's role in serving the park and recreation needs of southern Easton.**
- 7.9 The Town should consider a joint effort with the County to acquire land and develop an outdoor community swimming pool and recreation facility. This facility should be accessible to Town residents.**
- 7.10 The Town should acquire and develop smaller neighborhood park and open space areas throughout the Town as redevelopment of land creates opportunities.**
- 7.11 The Town should acquire and preserve natural buffer areas along the undeveloped portions on both sides of the Easton By-pass and the Route 50 corridor.**
- 7.12 The Town and County should more actively participate in the State's Program Open Space. Program Open Space is administered by the Capital Programs Agency of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The program provides funding in the form of 100 percent grants to local governments for land acquisition for recreational purposes. Currently the program is set up so that grants to municipalities must be administered through the County. It is important that Easton and Talbot County work together to apply for grants which will benefit the Town.**
- 7.13 The Town should acquire and develop parkland and open space through other actions and programs including mandatory dedication, fee- in-lieu of mandatory dedication, outright purchase, installment purchase, long-term lease with option to buy, recreation use easements and donations.**
- 7.14 County school sites should continue to be used as community park and open space facilities for the Town's residents.**
- 7.15 The Town should work more closely with Talbot County to jointly coordinate parks and open-space acquisition and facilities development. This would include the coordination of a joint Town and County Master Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.**
- 7.16 The Town should continue to support and enhance year-round and seasonal recreation programs and activities for Town and County residents.**
- 7.17 The Town should develop standards for mandatory open space dedication and payments-in-lieu of dedication for new residential subdivisions based on the size and density of the development. These standards should be incorporated into the Town's Subdivision Regulations.**
- 7.18 Community open space should be acquired and developed as part of any future planned unit developments (PUDs) which may be built in the Town.**

TABLE 7
EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

<u>TYPES AND AREAS</u>	<u>SIZE ACRES</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>	<u>FACILITIES</u>
<u>Mini-Parks</u>			
Thompson	5.0	Town	Undeveloped
Clifton	.25	Town	Passive
<u>Neighborhood Parks</u>			
South Street	.3	Town	Playground
South Clifton	10.0	Town	Undeveloped
Glenwood Elem/Vo-tech	10.0	County	Playground Baseball Field Basketball Courts
Mount Pleasant Elem		County	Playground Fields
<u>Community Parks</u>			
Idlewilde	15.0	Town	(2) Softball Fields (1) Track (1) Picnic Area (12) Tables (3) Tennis Courts (1) Basketball Court (1) Football Field
Moton Park	15.0	Town	Undeveloped
Easton High School	18.0	County	(1) Football Field (1) Soccer Field (1) Field Hockey Field (1) Lacrosse Field (3) Ball Fields
Easton Middle School	12.5	County	(1) Track (3) Ball Fields (1) Football Field (2) Field Hockey Field (1) Lacrosse Field
Stoney Ridge	20.0	Town	Undeveloped
<u>Special Park Areas</u>			
Talbot County YMCA	10.0	Quasi-Public	Indoor Facilities
VFW Club	5.0	Quasi-Public	(1) Softball Field
Talbot County Historical Society	1.0	Quasi-Public	Historic Structure
Warner Wildlife Sanctuary	8.0	Quasi-Public	Nature Conservancy

Source: Talbot County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, Draft 1987.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN ELEMENT

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN ELEMENT

Easton's public services and utilities are of vital importance to the continued physical, economic, and social improvement of the Town and the surrounding region. Expansion of certain basic economic activities can be more readily accomplished provided that public and private utility and service systems are adequate for the existing and projected population of the Town. A major goal of the Town is to ensure the continued adequate maintenance and expansion of community facilities and public services necessary to guarantee public health, safety and welfare and enhance residents quality of life. This goal is balanced against the fiscal ability of the Town to provide necessary community facilities and services and its objectives for managing the location and rate of the Town's growth and development.

The provision of water, sewer, solid waste disposal services, electricity, gas, schools, libraries, parks and recreation areas, hospitals, police and fire protection, to the community is essential to Easton's growth. The Community Facilities Plan Element establishes policies which coordinate the needs of the community with the ability of the Town to provide facilities and services in an efficient manner at a reasonable cost to Town residents. Because of the Town's dominant function as a regional commercial and employment center, Easton must consider the demands of the surrounding region, as well as the needs for local residents, upon Town facilities and services.

WATER AND SEWER

Water and sewer services for the Town are provided by the Easton Utilities Commission, an agency of the Town of Easton. The Easton Utilities Commission is responsible for the operation, construction and maintenance of the Town's water and sewer systems. It is anticipated that the Town will remain the sole supplier of water and sewer services in Easton throughout the plan period. The capacity of Easton's water and sewer facilities will be sufficient to service projected Town populations of 10,573 in the year 2,000 and 13,229 in 2010.

The Town's water source currently is derived from wells tapping into deep fresh water aquifers. The Town is planning to add 2 million gallons per day capacity to the public water supply in 1988. This is a 65 percent increase added to current capacity. This addition will increase capacity from 2,160 gallons per minute (gpm) to 3,560 gpm. A similar capacity addition is anticipated in another 10 years or so. Future planned capacities should be more than adequate to serve projected populations.

The Town is also currently upgrading sewage treatment to meet current State and Federal Standards. Additional efforts are being made to rehabilitate existing sewer lines to reduce infiltration and inflow. Within the next five years the Town plans to increase sewage treatment capacity. Outfall from the Town's treatment plant is discharged into the Choptank River.

Extensions of the Town's public water and sewer systems are currently based upon a County-wide Water and Sewer Facilities Plan and "on demand as required" by new development. In order to more effectively manage the location and rate of growth and development in Easton, it is recommended that, in the future, sewer and water service extensions be based upon a Capital Improvement Program which is in accordance with the Comprehensive Development Plan. The Town should revise its Sewer and Water Facilities Plan, which establishes immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term service areas priorities, to be in accordance with the development patterns established by the Conceptual Development Plan Map and the growth management objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Development Plan. The current Town Sewer and Water Service Areas Plan Map is included in this section for purposes of illustrating existing priorities for service.

The Town should continue to provide water and sewer delivery services to only those areas within the corporate Town limits. Annexation decisions should carefully consider the costs and benefits of extending services to proposed annexation areas.

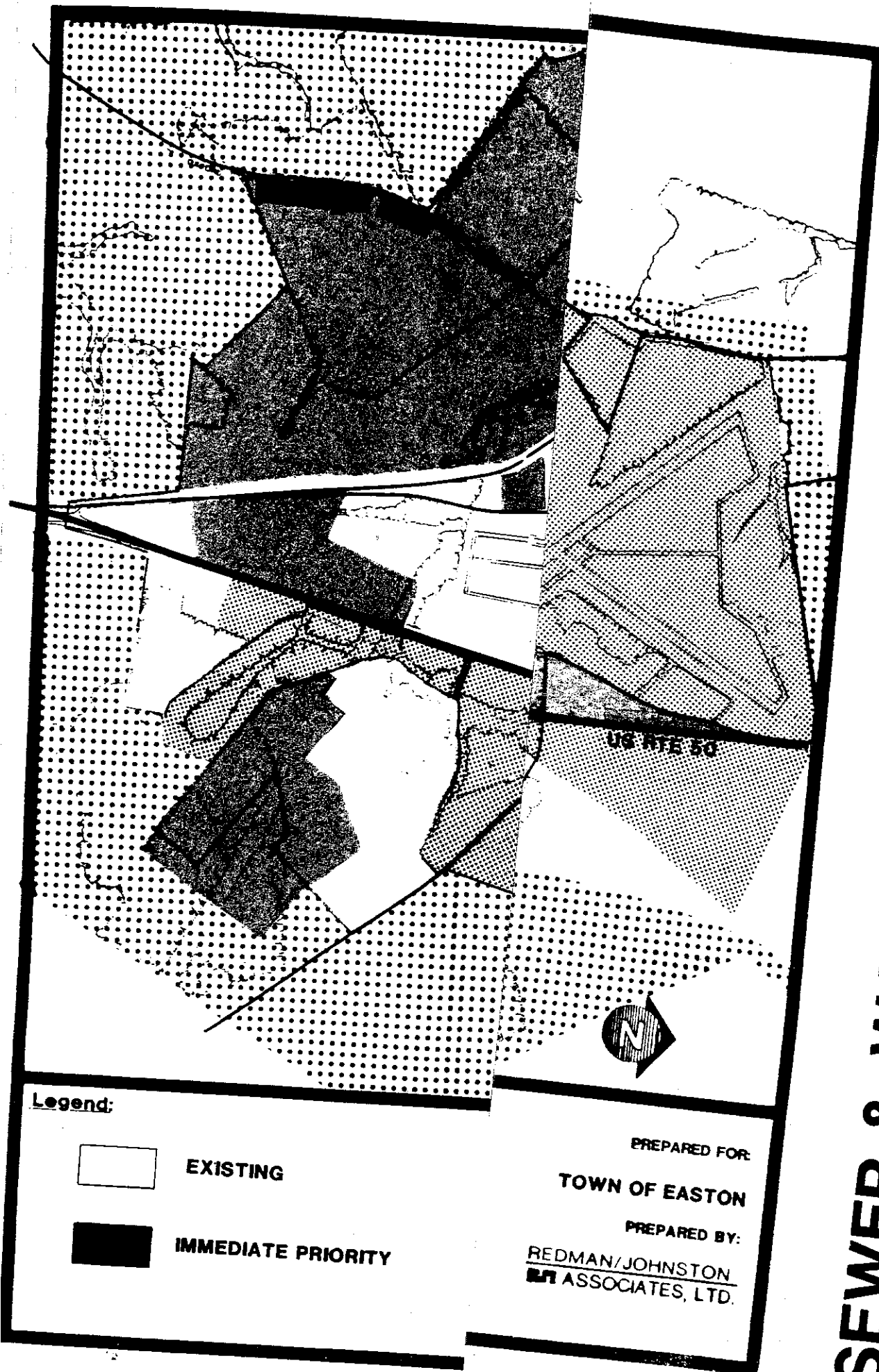
The Easton Utilities Commission has established "Tap Fees" for water and sewer for all new development within the Town. These fees compensate for the Town's expense of hooking-up service to new development and an equitable proportional share of future capital improvements costs for sewer and water systems maintenance and expansion. The costs of extending sewer and water lines to any new development is borne in full by the developer.

More recently the Town has enacted legislation which limits the amount of sewer service available to any one development in any one year to not more than twenty (20) percent of the Town's annual net available capacity. Annual net available capacity is determined by subtracting the Town's annual obligations for sewer capacity from the annual gross available sewer capacity as determined by the State. The basis for this new regulation is to extend the availability of the Town's sewer capacity over a longer period of time and also to ensure an equitable distribution of that capacity to a number of different development projects in different areas of the Town. Without this annual twenty (20) percent cap it is possible that a single large development project could consume the Town's entire annual sewer capacity in one year thereby necessitating the need for the Town to undertake expensive expansion of its treatment facilities.

POLICE SERVICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The adequacy of existing police services, the expected future needs of the police force, and the optimal organization of the department should be continually evaluated. Future considerations of the Town should include normal force and facilities expansion as Easton's population and public safety needs increase.

SEWER & WATER SERVICE AREAS



FIRE SERVICE

Fire protection in the Town of Easton and the surrounding County area is provided by the Easton Volunteer Fire Department. The department is an all volunteer organization with financial support from the Town and County. Recently the Easton Volunteer Fire Department has added Emergency Medical Services. There is a State Fire Marshall responsible for Fire Code enforcement in the Town and County. Fire Protection services should be expanded throughout the Plan period as the Town and County's population continues to increase. As the Town of Easton continues to grow there will eventually be required the need for an additional fire station. The Town should consider sites in south Easton to locate this additional facility. The Town Planning and Zoning Office should confer with the Fire Department in the review of commercial building permits and subdivision plats in reference to the availability of adequate water supply, access to structures, and the strategic location of fire hydrants.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The establishment of County schools within the Town greatly affects Easton's development. An adequately trained labor force depends upon the quality of education as well as the types of courses offered to local residents. Because of the impact of schools upon the Town's development, coordination between the Town and the Talbot County Board of Education in preparing a County Education Master Plan and reviewing proposed facility plans should be encouraged.

The County Board of Education is currently in the process of developing a long-range plan for implementing the geographic and grade-level organizational decisions made regarding the County's schools. The County Board of Education is also developing a strategic plan for the repair, maintenance and upgrading of public educational facilities. The Vocational Technical School building and the Glenwood Elementary school building are scheduled for extensive renovation. Plans include having grades kindergarten through two in the Glenwood Elementary Building and grades three to five in the Vo-Tech Building. The Vocational-Technical program is planned to be moved to the High School. The Mount Pleasant Elementary School is planned to be converted to the School Board office, a day care facility, a maintenance facility and a pre-kindergarten program. Long-range facility plans include additions to Easton High School.

The Talbot County Board of Education projects school enrollment in the County to increase an average of 2.3 percent annually through 1996. This trend is projected to escalate during the remainder of the Plan period to correspond with overall Town Population projections contained in this Plan.

The continued use of school facilities and grounds within Easton for Town and County sponsored Parks and Recreation Department activities and programs is encouraged. School grounds within the Town are important play and recreation areas for neighborhood children and adults.

LIBRARY SERVICES

In accordance with recommendations from the 1974 Comprehensive Plan, the County constructed a new and expanded Free Library to the rear of the County Courthouse. This facility is projected to adequately provide library service needs for the Town and County throughout the Plan period.

HOSPITAL FACILITIES

As Memorial Hospital has expanded, the Hospital and surrounding residential areas have encountered increasing conflicts. The Hospital is unable to consolidate all related facilities on a single parcel of land because of a lack of space. As a result the Hospital and its parking facilities have begun to encroach upon the surrounding neighborhood. Neighborhood residents are disturbed by traffic, parking and the intrusion of intensive activities into their residential environment. Activities to reduce conflict between the Hospital and adjoining residential areas include; continued coordination of Hospital expansion plans with the Town, and improvement of the traffic circulation and parking pattern in the area, principally along Port Street, West Street, and South Street.

SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

Easton currently owns and operates a sanitary landfill located within Talbot County, southeast of Town. Talbot County contracts with the Town to dispose of its solid waste at this facility. State mandates require that within the next three to five years the Town and County establish a new sanitary landfill. Locations being considered for the new facility include a site adjacent to the existing landfill and a proposed regional facility in Caroline County. Garbage collection within Easton is handled by the Town.

UTILITIES (ELECTRICITY AND GAS)

Easton Utilities also provides electricity and gas throughout the Town. Diesel generators are used to produce electricity at the power plant located downtown. Capacity for both electricity and gas are adequate and expected to remain so during the Plan period with incremental improvements.

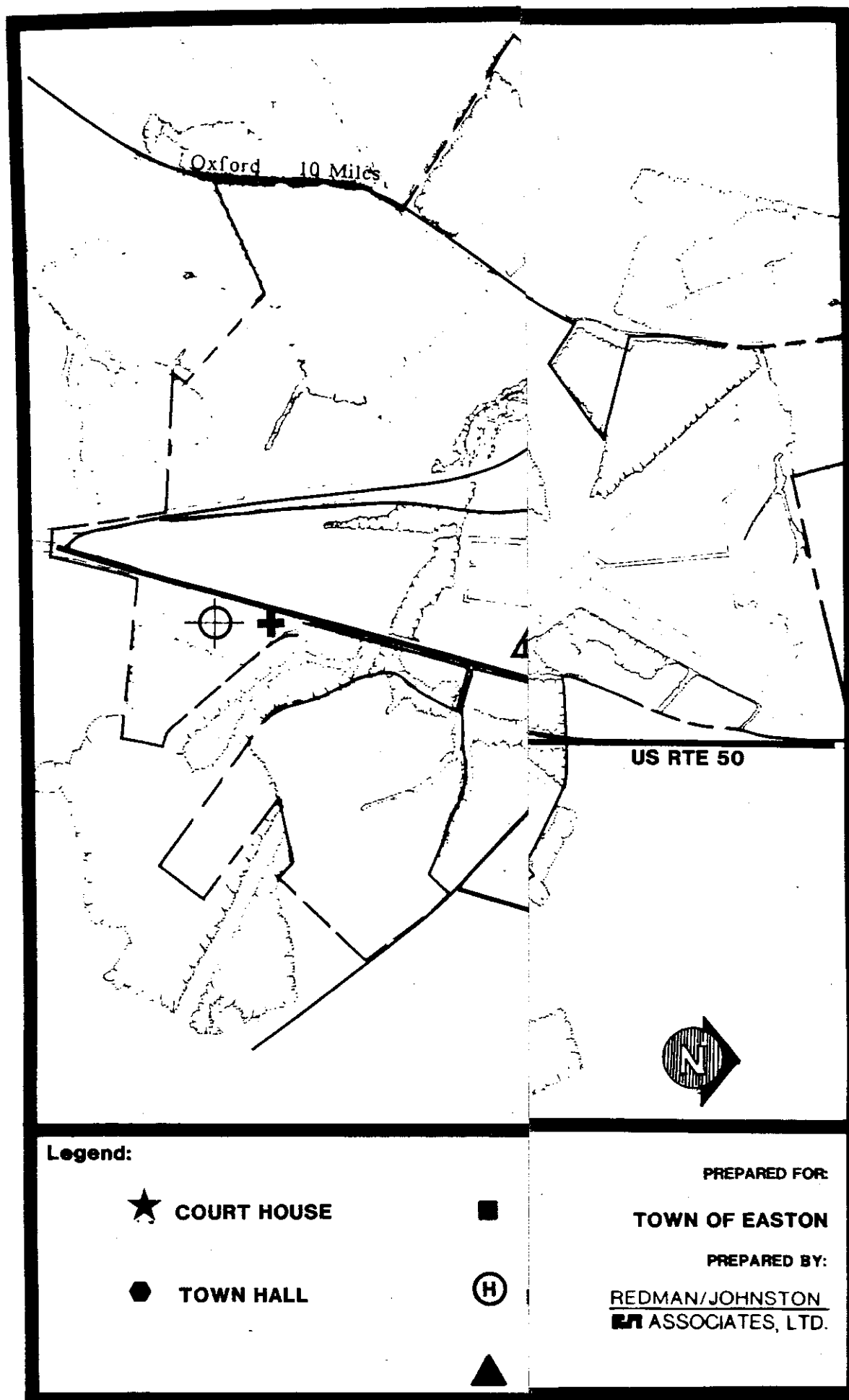
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES POLICIES

The following policies are established relating to community facilities and services delivery systems:

- 8.1 The Town should provide community facilities and services based upon a Capital Improvements Program which is in accordance with the Comprehensive Development Plan.**

- 8.2 The provision of community facilities and services as outlined in the Capital Improvements Program should be balanced against the fiscal ability of the Town to provide facilities and services and the Town's objectives for managing the location and rate of growth and development.**
- 8.3 The Town should ensure in the formulation of its Capital Improvements Program that all areas and residents of the Town are equitably provided community facilities and services.**
- 8.4 The Town should revise its Sewer and Water Extension Plan establishing service area priorities to be in accordance with the Comprehensive Development Plan and Town objectives for growth management.**
- 8.5 The Town should continue to only provide sewer and water services to areas and developments within the corporate Town limits.**
- 8.6 Sewer and water Tap Fees and the annual twenty (20) percent sewer cap for individual projects should be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure these measures are effective in achieving Town fiscal and growth management objectives regarding sewer and water service extensions.**
- 8.7 The Town should not permit future development which adversely impacts the Town's ability to adequately provide public facilities and services including; sewer, water, solid waste, schools, police and fire protection, public roads, storm sewer drainage, and other public improvements.**
- 8.8 The Town should adopt an Adequate Facilities Ordinance which requires that all new development "pay its own way" in providing the additional community facilities and services necessary as a result of the new development, and which prohibits any new development unless adequate community facilities are in place or proposed.**

COMMUNITY FACILITIES



TRANSPORTATION PLAN ELEMENT

TRANSPORTATION PLAN ELEMENT

The Transportation Plan Element establishes a functional classification for State, County and Town roads and streets which are important to the future development of Easton and the movement of vehicles within and through Town. A functional classification defines the primary objectives and purposes for roads and streets and is an important criteria in evaluating improvement proposals and development proposals which may affect the function and level of service of the roadway. This section of the Plan makes specific recommendations for improvements to the Town's road and street network which should serve to relieve traffic congestion problems and make travel through and within the Town more efficient. The future development of the Easton Municipal Airport, port facilities, and rail facilities are also addressed. Because of the specific nature of recommendations contained in this section of the Plan, general policies are not established as they are in other Plan Elements.

ROADS AND STREETS : FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

The functional classification of roads and streets is in accordance with the following classifications; arterials, collector streets and local streets. The Transportation Plan Element focuses primarily on facilities which the Town is responsible for. Improvements recommended for various state and county roads must be coordinated with the Talbot County Council and the Maryland State Highways Administration. Major road improvement recommendations are outlined on the Major Transportation Improvements Map contained in this section of the Plan.

Arterials

The primary purpose of arterial highways is to provide continuous and efficient routes for high-volume local and regional traffic. Access to abutting land and property is a secondary purpose, with the major objective being the expeditious movement of traffic between major traffic generators. Arterial highways are designed not to divide homogeneous neighborhoods into separate segments but to serve as boundaries for various neighborhoods. The functional classification system establishes two classification categories for arterial highways; principal and minor.

Principal Arterial Highways

- * U.S. Route 50 (Ocean Highway) - In efforts to improve the flow of traffic to and from Ocean City through Easton and to reduce congestion through the Route 50 corridor, the Maryland State Highway Administration has considered the development of a by-pass road on the east side of Town. If the by-pass is ever constructed by the State, access to the route should be controlled and limited as adjacent development occurs.

Minor Arterial Highways

- * MD. Route 322 (Easton Parkway) - Access to the Parkway should remain controlled and limited. Dualization of the Parkway should be postponed until such time as traffic generated by increasing flows on Routes 33 and 333 require its dualization.
- * St. Michaels Road (Md. Route 33) - from intersection of Parkway westward to St. Michaels. The County should consider dualization of Route 33 from the Easton Parkway to St. Michaels when the St. Michaels by-pass is constructed (probably within 5 to 10 years).
- * Bay Street (Md. Route 33) - from Washington Street westward to Easton parkway.
- * Dover Road (Md. Route 331) - from Washington Street eastward to Caroline County.
- * Peachblossom - Oxford Road (Md. Route 333) - from Washington Street to Oxford.
- * Washington Street - North of Bay Street (Md. Route 33) to Idlewilde Avenue.
- * Washington Street (Md. Route 565) - south of Dover Street to Parkway.
- * Matthewstown Road (Md. Route 328) - from U. S. Route 50 eastward to Caroline County.

Collector Streets

The primary purpose of the collector street system is to collect traffic from local streets, provide access to abutting land, and provide for the direct movement of traffic to an arterial street. Establishment of a unified network of collector streets to provide direct access to adjoining arterial highways is essential. Due to the nature of adjoining land uses, collector streets may serve a variety of specialized functions, such as commercial, industrial, or residential routes and in some instances may require a larger right-of-way than established minimums. The following listing identifies functional classification and in some cases recommends improvements.

Major Collector Streets

- * Airport Road - Black Dog Alley west of Rt. 50; including Goldsborough Neck Road to Glebe Road.
- * Black Dog Alley Extended - a proposed local collector to be constructed to the northeast of Town, east of U. S. Route 50 southward to Matthewstown Road. The road could be built using existing rights-of-way.

- * Goldsborough Street - east of Washington Street and west of U.S. Route 50.
- * Cordova Road (Md. Route 309) - east of U. S. Route 50 northeastward to Queen Anne.
- * Idlewilde Avenue - from U.S. Route 50 to Washington Street.
- * Old Chapel Road - at its intersection with Route 50. Due to the unsafe nature of this intersection, a new signalized intersection should be developed on Route 50 south of Old Chapel Road to service a proposed cross over road to provide access for future development in the area.
- * Washington Street from Idlewilde Avenue south to the Town limits.

Minor Collector Streets

- * West Street - should be rehabilitated within existing right-of-way between Port and Biery Streets. Upon completion, this existing route would comprise an extension of the westerly boundary of a "loop" system of local streets which would provide a circular traffic pattern circumventing the Central Business District. The improved extension would provide access from the "loop" to hospital parking areas.
- * Harrison Street - North Harrison Street should be realigned to intersect Washington Street at the Washington Street Bay Street intersection. Consider closing the existing non-signalized intersection of North Harrison and Washington Streets.
- * Federal Street - from West Street to Hammond Street.
- * Dover Street - from West Street to Hammond Street.
- * Biery Street - Biery Street should be extended to intersect with Port Street between the Parkway and Washington Street. Upon completion, the street would provide direct access from the Parkway to Easton Memorial Hospital Parking areas.
- * Aurora Street - from North Washington to South Washington
- * Dutchman's Lane - from Washington Street to U.S. Rt. 50
- * Glebe Road - from Washington Street to Easton Parkway
- * Wrightson Avenue - from Glebe Road to Washington Street
- * South Street - from Washington to Aurora Street
- * Brooklets Avenue - from Washington Street to U.S. 50 via High Street

- * New Collector - from Glebe Road to Route 33 as the Dudrow property is developed
- * Fourth Street - should be extended eastward to provide additional access to the Stoney Ridge subdivision from MD Route 50

Local Streets

The most extensive part of the local road network is the development of a series of local streets whose primary purpose is to provide direct access to adjoining properties. A secondary purpose would be to provide unified linkage with collector streets, which in turn lead to arterial streets. Existing street patterns and physical facilities are retained. However, in newly developing areas, the local street pattern can be altered as necessary in order that through traffic is discouraged. The intent of the local street pattern is to provide immediate access to property, not movement of traffic through the area. Local street rights-of-way are acquired through dedication by subdividers as land areas are subdivided for development. An example of the development of the local street system might be the connection of Old Chapel Road with an extension to Laurel Street to accommodate residential neighborhood expansion in North Easton. The Town is responsible for the repair and maintenance of local streets. All subdivision streets must be constructed to established Town standards.

Plans should be made to designate bicycle routes on the local street system. These routes should also be located on selected State highways where possible. The Parks and Open Space system should also provide bicycle paths which are coordinated with routes established on local streets. The abandoned railroad right of way running north-south through Town could be developed as a biking and jogging trail.

EAST-WEST ACCESS

One of the major transportation problems that has evolved with the development of Easton is the lack of east-west access through the northern part of Town. Not having a good through route in the north end of Town causes many problems for the Town including congestion in the CBD by through traffic mixing with local traffic and lack of good access from Route 50 and points east to the Town's principal commercial center on Marlboro Road. The Major Transportation Improvement Map outlines two alternatives for enhancing east-west access in the northern end of Town.

Alternative A

Alternative A would involve construction of a new road from the northern U.S. Route 50 and Maryland Route 322 intersection to run southeasterly to connect with Maryland Route 328. This alternative would involve a major realignment of the northern intersection of Easton Parkway and Route 50.

Alternative B

Alternative B was also previously discussed as a suggested collector street improvement. Alternative B would improve Black Dog Alley Road east of Route 50 between U.S. Route 50 and Maryland Route 328. On the west side of Route 50, Black Dog Alley Road, Goldsborough Neck Road, Glebe Road would all be improved.

AIRPORT

Easton Municipal Airport is a publicly-owned facility located in the northern end of Town. The airport is jointly owned by the Town of Easton and Talbot County, and is operated by the Easton Airport Authority. The airport is in very good condition and has recently undergone many improvements with future improvements and expansions planned. The airport services mostly corporate jets and private planes with some light charter service. The airport averages 70 to 80 takeoffs/landings per day with some peak days (e.g., Waterfowl Festival) reaching 200 per day. A new terminal facility was recently constructed. Planned improvements include lengthening Runway 4-22 by 1,750 feet and the construction of corporate jet hangers along Old Centreville Road. The Airport Authority has prepared a Master Plan for the future development of Easton Municipal Airport facilities and services.

To encourage the growth of the airport as an integral part of the Town's balanced Transportation Plan, the following land use and transportation recommendations are made:

- * Air development rights should be acquired from all property owners situated within the "clear zone" of all runways.
- * There should remain a 500' setback of all development from the airstrips.
- * Industrial development is encouraged for lands adjacent to the airport. Residential development should be discouraged because of the nuisance impacts associated with airports. Lands directly adjacent to airport facilities should be reserved for airport-oriented development.
- * There is a need for a conference center/hotel facility to be located near the airport terminal to accommodate increasing corporate air service needs.
- * A local collector highway system which circumvents existing and future airport land areas will be needed and can be accomplished through the upgrading of Black Dog Alley from U.S. Rt. 50, westward to Goldsborough Neck Road. Efforts to improve Goldsborough Neck Road from Black Dog Alley to Glebe Road should be encouraged. The final section of the highway link would be accomplished through upgrading Glebe Road from Goldsborough to Easton Parkway.

PORT

The Tred Avon River has historically played an important role in the development of the Town of Easton and Talbot County. One of the main rivers of a number of scenic rivers in Talbot County, the river has served as a source of transportation and scenic beauty since colonial times. Easton originated around the Friends Meeting House near the banks of the Tred Avon.

Waterside facilities on the Tred Avon River at Easton Point consist of approximately 1,200 feet of bulkhead, 250 feet of which is owned by Talbot County. The remainder are privately owned and operated by oil companies for the transfer and storage of petroleum products. A public landing and marina occupies a small site at the end of Port Street on Easton Point. The marina is fully equipped with the addition of berths and slips used by boats visiting the marina, contains a marine railway, launching ramp and a travel lift.

Although the primary use of the river is for recreational purposes, the major economic value of the river is due to its use for the transporting of petroleum and petroleum products. According to the Army Corps of Engineers in the early 70's, approximately 90 percent of all waterborne commerce in Talbot County and the Easton area on the Tred Avon River concerned the delivery of petroleum products. The remaining 10 percent consisted of bulk delivery of shellfish, and materials which are needed in the construction industry. The river used to be a major source for delivering fuel materials to serve the population of Easton and the immediate three-county area of Talbot, Caroline and Queen Anne's County. Use of the Port has been declining in recent years because of improved road transportation routes serving the Town. It's use by oil distributors in particular has diminished. Sand and gravel materials are barged to terminal facilities at Barton Point and Easton Utilities, INC. Shipments of fuel oil by barge are used by Easton Utilities to generate local power. The Town is currently proceeding to annex Easton Point.

To encourage the balanced use of the river consistent with environmental and scenic concerns, the following improvements are suggested:

- * The north half and western edge of Easton Point should remain as port-related industrial areas.
- * Port Street, serving the Easton Point area, should be improved as an industrial collector highway providing access from the numerous petroleum storage areas to Easton Parkway. Truck weight, combined with frequency of use, requires a greater degree of improvement than is normally necessary for Town street construction.
- * The southern portion of Easton Point should be redeveloped as a waterfront area possibly to include a small boat marina in conjunction with a riverfront park as proposed in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan Element.
- * All future port and waterfront development should occur in compliance with the Town and County's Critical Area Program.

RAIL

Rail service in Easton has been discontinued and in some areas of Town tracks have been removed. Future rail service during the plan period may include the revival of some short-term light rail services although the current level of potential rail use does not appear to support cost-effective service. Lands adjacent to the north-south railroad right-of-way through Town are no longer reserved for industrial use. The rail corridor may provide future opportunities for reuse as a linear park or greenway through the length of the Town.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN ELEMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN ELEMENT

The Economic Development Plan Element establishes policies leading towards preserving and strengthening Easton as a center for regional retailing, service, and select industrial activities while simultaneously maintaining the high quality of life Easton residents have come to enjoy and expect. Well-planned diversification and expansion of the Town's and region's economy provides Easton and its residents a more stable and secure economic base. A successful economic development program creates jobs and income and also bolsters the Town's tax base thereby providing funds for needed community facilities, services and improvements.

As the retailing center for the middle Eastern Shore region, Easton and the surrounding area are mutually dependent. Easton relies upon the region to support its business; and the outlying areas need goods and services that Easton provides. The Town's Economic Development yields substantial benefits to the entire region and therefore the economic development efforts of the Town should receive cooperation and support of the Talbot County Government.

The primary economic labor and trade market for the Town encompasses all of Talbot County. In 1980 nearly 24 percent of the County's work force of 12,823 lived outside of Talbot County. The high cost of housing in Easton and Talbot County is partially responsible for this trend. There are three major employers in the Talbot County/Easton economic market. These include Memorial Hospital (800-850 employees) Black and Decker (750 employees) and Waverly Press (483 employees). Table 8 identifies these and other selected major employers in the County.

TABLE 8
SELECTED MAJOR EMPLOYERS WITHIN THE EASTON AREA
Firms with 75 or More Employees)

Name	Location	Employment
Black and Decker Mfg. Co.	Easton By-pass	750
C&P Telephone Company	Washington Street	108
Chesapeake Publishing	Easton By-pass	105
Memorial Hospital	Washington Street	800-850
Old Salt Seafood	Airport Industrial Park	75
The Tidewater Inn	Dover Street	115
William Hill Manor	Dutchman's Lane	75
Waverly Press	Idlewilde Avenue	483
Wheaton Tubing Products	Airport Industrial Park	75
Yale Underwear Company	N. Washington Street	150
TOTAL		<hr/> 2,776 - 2,826

* Excludes government employees.

Source: Survey by Morton Hoffman and Company, Inc.

The driving force behind economic development in the County during the plan period should be the development and expansion of small service and retail businesses oriented towards serving the growing tourism economy of the area. Nationwide 8 out of every 10 new jobs created last year in the United States were the result of growing small businesses. Although there have been no major increases in manufacturing employment over recent years, manufacturing jobs are also expected to increase during the Plan period given the areas high quality of life, attractiveness, proximity to the growing Baltimore/Washington D.C. metropolitan area, and presence of industrial sites adequately serviced by infrastructure and utilities. The County has typically had a low unemployment employment rate. The relatively small size of the areas labor market is probably the County's greatest deterrent in terms of future economic growth.

Easton is fortunate in having a location which is unique in its aesthetic qualities and high quality environment. Communities have learned that a careful analysis of potential industrial development is especially necessary to assure that the quality of past development will be continued for the future. Easton's economic development has in the past been sensitive to the quality of the local environment. Future economic development opportunities should continue to be cognizant of the positive attributes which make Easton such a pleasant place to live and work.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- 10.1 The Town should continue an economic development program designed to attract clean -- select or light industries to locate in the Town's industrial parks in order to expand and diversify the economic base.
- 10.2 The Town should encourage existing businesses and industries to maintain and expand their operations within the Town.
- 10.3 Industrial prospects should be carefully screened and evaluated to ensure that their operations and activities will be compatible with Town character.
- 10.4 The Town should coordinate its economic development program with County efforts in order to avoid duplication of effort and also to ensure that the two jurisdiction's programs are comprehensive and complimentary
- 10.5 The Town should provide a full range of housing opportunities and community services necessary to accommodate future population growth generated through the planned expansion of the economy and the resultant creation of new jobs.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

The Town Comprehensive Plan is intended to capture a vision of the future Easton. It provides a basis for a wide variety of public and private actions and development decisions regarding growth management which are to be undertaken in the Town over time. It is not a static document because a community is not static, but rather one which provides general guidelines to the local community in order that piecemeal improvements or day to day decisions can be properly evaluated against their long-range impact upon the community and their relationship to existing development patterns.

The Plan, and in particular the Land Use Plan Element and Conceptual Development Plan Map, indicates the proposed general development pattern of the community during the Plan period to 2010. However it is not a detailed blueprint. Local conditions, values, and philosophies change as a result of economic and political pressures and the Plan must subsequently be responsive to these changes. The Plan is not a document which encourages regimentation. It is, however, a guide which encourages patterns of development which advocate planned, orderly and economical growth of the community in a manner which can be more efficiently served with a variety of community services and facilities.

Sections which follow identify methods to implement Plan proposals. Implementation involves the concerted actions of both Town elected officials and certain appointed boards. The responsibilities of these parties and their respective roles in the implementation of the plan is summarized below.

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council is the final authority concerning decisions to adopt or revise and amend the Comprehensive Plan for Easton. They are also a dominant group responsible for implementing Plan proposals. As chief elected officials of the community they are responsible for directing public concern into a public policy and addressing community needs through public action.

The Easton Council is fortunate in having charter powers which invest them with a variety of responsibilities and authority necessary to discharge their public responsibilities. Under this section of the Comprehensive Development Plan, specific proposals are identified which will require consideration by the Mayor and Council.

Recommendations of the Plan are designed to assist the community in improving both the environmental atmosphere of the area and the quality of life for people. To accomplish these goals, the Council will be primarily responsible for undertaking the following actions to make the Plan adopted public policy.

- * The Council must, under Maryland law, review, and adopt the Comprehensive Plan. This procedure is necessary in order that the community have a foundation for adopted Zoning and Subdivision regulatory controls, or to serve as a basis for their revision.

- * The Council must review specific improvement projects within the context of the Comprehensive Plan, and;
- * Allocate funds under their direct control consistent with projects proposed by the Plan within the limitations which will prevail based on funding constraints.
- * Institute procedures to coordinate the actions of Talbot County government as well as various State and Federal agencies to assure they are consistent with Town Planning objectives.
- * Oversee the coordination of development activities and proposed programs either as a "committee as a whole" or by delegating this function to the Planning Commission or appropriate Town staff for their detailed analysis and opinions.

As a summary of the actions to be taken by the Easton Mayor and Council, the following items are listed as a guide. Each category is presented as a method of clarifying the various roles of the Mayor and Council in plan implementation.

A. Legislative

- * Officially adopt the Easton Comprehensive Development Plan after appropriate review, discussion and public hearings.
- * Adoption of recommended revisions of the Easton Zoning Ordinance to implement basic land use policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- * Adoption of recommended revisions of the Subdivision Ordinance to assure consistency with any development standards suggested within the plan.

B. Administrative

- * Maintain inspections staff to enforce a variety of locally enacted codes including zoning, housing, building, plumbing, electric, and fire codes.
- * Maintain an annual capital improvements program and capital budgeting process in order to clearly indicate assets, liabilities and continuing services of the community.
- * Maintain through future appointment the roles and functions of ongoing Town board and committees including the Town Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Historic District Commission and other ad hoc committees which may be required to assist them from time to time in plan related actions or activities.

C. Coordination

- * Institute regularly scheduled periodic meetings with the Talbot County Council, and other Talbot municipalities as a method of coordinating plans and programs relative to common problems. Creation of a Talbot Council of Governments could be instituted to enhance joint programming efforts and coordination needs.
- * Institute cooperative meetings with the Easton Utilities Commission, Hospital Board, Library Board, School Board and other local boards to assure that the future location of physical facilities will be consistent with local service extension policies.
- * Maintain ongoing procedures for incorporating citizen views into the planning process to make public plans consistent with public needs.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission appointed by the Mayor and Council is instrumental in directing the Comprehensive Planning and improvement efforts of the Town of Easton. The Commission's role is to coordinate, to educate, to advise, to recommend and to support wherever possible the activities of citizens and governmental agencies in their efforts to implement the plan. Under Maryland law, (Article 66 B to the Annotated Code) the Planning Commission is responsible for the preparation and periodic update or revision of the Plan as they deem necessary.

One of the most significant roles for the Planning Commission in the Town development process is to serve as a coordinating body for the Mayor and Council. The Maryland Planning Enabling Act provides the Planning Commission with broad authority to review, study and recommend solutions to various local development issues. In exercising this responsibility, the Planning Commission has the following responsibilities:

- * Preparation of the Comprehensive plan which serves as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to insure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationship to local needs and improvement schedules.
- * The Planning Commission must approve the Plan and recommend its adoption by the Town Council. The Plan must conform to the basic elements required by State Law.
- * The Commission should promote public understanding of the Plan and what it seeks to accomplish and to incorporate citizen participation in the planning process.
- * The Commission should recommend to appropriate public officials programs for construction of public structures and improvements which are necessary to implement the Plan.

- * The Commission should prepare and file an Annual Report with the Town Council. The report is the method through which the Planning Commission identifies changing conditions within the Town and brings these conditions to the attention of the Council.

In addition to the duties generally identified by Article 66B, The Maryland Planning and Zoning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission is charged with a variety of specific administrative functions which are more directly related to day to day decisions which cumulatively effect implementation of the Plan. These functions include:

- * Review and approval of all Subdivision proposals consistent with the requirements and authority established by the Town Subdivision Regulations.
- * Review, report and recommend to the Mayor and the Council concerning all rezoning requests brought before the Town. The Commission reviews each proposal for consistency with the Town Comprehensive Plan as per standards for review contained in the Town Zoning Ordinance.
- * Review and comment upon various requests for Special Exceptions which are ultimately decided by the Town Board of Appeals.
- * Review plans and design sketches for special developments such as cluster developments, multi-family developments, and other large scale development projects.
- * Review and submit recommendations concerning the Town's Annual Capital Improvements Program.

Through exercising it's responsibility related to these specific items, the Planning Commission can exert great influence on the course and pattern of local development to assure consistency with Plan proposals.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Because the Comprehensive Plan establishes a broad-based development philosophy, implementation will affect the economic, social or cultural lives of a substantial number of Town citizens. To insure that plans, programs, and policies are responsive to local needs, citizen participation in the planning process should be encouraged. Participation by the public in planning and development issues has increased substantially in recent years albeit often in response to specific development proposals. The ultimate objective of citizen participation should be to not only improve citizen understanding of community needs but to encourage their participation in developing solutions to these needs in a broader planning context, rather than in reaction to individual development proposals. In the future the Mayor and Council and Planning Commission will need to continue to explore alternative techniques or forms through which this objective can be achieved.

The success of implementations proposals depends upon the awareness, concern and support of local citizens. By incorporating citizen viewpoints into the Plan revision process and implementation activities, a broad understanding of the Plan and the Council's development objectives can be attained.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The Town should undertake a comprehensive process leading to the preparation of a six year and annual Capital Improvements Program which constitutes both an effective public financial management tool and a mechanism for managing growth and development. Participants responsible for compiling a Capital Improvements Program can review all projects against objectives and policies established in the Comprehensive Development Plan. Short range improvements can then occur at a rate consistent with development and the Town's fiscal capacity.

The primary value of the Capital Improvements Program is to provide a public framework for establishing priorities and evaluating projects according to local needs. As various community needs are identified and detailed engineering and cost data accumulated, the Town Council is better able to project the impact of proposed projects on the Town's fiscal resources. By projecting citizen's needs over a 5-6 year span, various improvement projects can be effectively coordinated with local development policy.

Each project advocated for community development purposes should be described as to purpose, location, type of improvements and cost estimates. Projects should be assigned a code number and included within a special classification for review purposes. The entire program should be revised annually and projects which receive approval should be included in an Annual Capital Improvements Schedule. Projects should be kept in the program until completed.

In order to properly identify a variety of projects proposed for the Town, it is necessary to group various projects according to a uniform numbering system. All projects requiring allocation of municipal funds should be numbered, briefly described and added to each year's capital program. Categories are divided according to a basic functional classification such as streets, sewer and water extensions and parks. Project numbers should not be reused until a project is fully completed.

A critical element of the Capital Improvements Program is the development of a proposed revenue program which anticipates balancing community improvement expenditures with local revenues. The program identifies in both tabular and narrative form, sources of funding available to the Town to reduce project costs.

ANNEXATION

Future annexations should be of sufficient size to allow for proper planning of land use and community facilities. Annexations should be in accordance with a predetermined policy which permits smaller areas to be annexed as a part of an overall pattern. Smaller area annexations should also be undertaken to clarify boundaries and to prevent "county land islands" from occurring or to eliminate

Islands which have occurred over time, particularly along the Towns Southeastern edges.

Financial considerations play a paramount role in determining the course of future annexations both from the standpoint of the Town and its current residents and residents in the area proposed for annexation. The Town assumes considerable obligations to supply basic Town services to these areas as they develop. Unless development occurs within the areas immediately adjacent to existing development, a waste of public funds is involved in attempting to service remote and scattered clusters of development. Financial policy is equally important to public policy criteria for annexation and for resolving practical problems for people living in future Town areas.

To avoid Town-County conflicts which might result from development broad annexation objectives are presented which establish guidelines for future annexation efforts.

- * The primary purpose of future annexation efforts should be to provide existing residents and future citizens of the area with public facilities and services necessary for protection of health and property.
- * The annexed areas should be extended detailed help and cooperation in formulating and implementing plans for the orderly growth and protection of property.
- * Proposed annexation areas should be economically self sufficient and shouldn't result in larger municipal expenditures than anticipated revenues, which would indirectly burden existing Town residents with the costs of services or facilities to support the area annexed.
- * The costs of providing roads, utilities, parks, other community services should be borne by those people gaining the most value from their existence through either income, profits or participation.

Consideration of these guidelines for future annexations should result in the expansion of the Town at a pace and manner as to provide the maximum benefits of service at the lowest possible costs. Assurance is also extended to existing Town residents that new additions to the Town will be in accordance with long-range public policy.

Annexation Priorities

The map which follows provides an indication of the areas of immediate consideration for annexation during the Planning Period. The town corporate limits currently contain some 2000 acres of vacant land. Therefore annexation of many of these areas may not be prompted or required in the near term. Nevertheless these annexations afford opportunities for the town to direct the future pattern and scale of development along its edges. A brief review of each area is included and the major reasons for annexation are identified.

Priorities of future annexation should be governed by an effort to prevent the development of county "islands". These county land areas are virtually surrounded by the Town limits, enjoy some or all the advantages of the Town, yet do not share in the costs of these services. The continued existence of these areas can also create an administration and law enforcement conflicts over jurisdictional issues.

Area A consists of approximately 200 acres of land immediately adjacent to the southwesterly Town boundary of the Town east of Oxford Road and extends south to Peachblossom Creek. These areas should be annexed to prevent Town-County jurisdictional and service conflicts. Utilities can be more efficiently provided by the Town to service development in this area. Annexation of Area A will provide a logical extension of the Town limits to provide land for future residential development, establishing through the Peachblossom Creek a natural southern Town boundary.

Area B consists of approximately 125 acres of land which have undergone changes in ownership and piecemeal subdivisions for residential, commercial or industrial development in the past. Rapid commercial expansion and subdivision practices have created a need to annex this area before further piecemeal development creates even greater multiple ownership and an unserviceable pattern of development. An island of Clifton not in the Town limits should be brought in as part of this area. Further industrial development of the Clifton Industrial park can occur in more serviceable form with annexation.

Area C consists of approximately 115 acres of land in the vicinity of Easton Point. The accessibility of this area to Easton Parkway its geographic location to the Town and the benefits of Town waterfront access make this particular area one of greater priority. Likewise development of the area in any form will likely require future utility services due to soil limitations. This area creates Town waterfront access and development opportunities. The Tred Avon's north and south forks serve as a very natural Town edge.

Area D consists of approximately 300 acres of land located to the southwest of Easton adjacent to the Tred Avon River downstream from Easton Point. Located along Waverly Road it has potential for some future development. Future health problems could arise because poor soil characteristics in this area will not support more intensive development. Substantial existing County development exists in this area and absent the need or requirement to extend sewer treatment to the area it may not be a priority area for annexation in the planning period.

Area E comprises approximately 400 acres of land immediately adjacent to the easterly side of U.S. Route 50, south of Dover Road and including the land area by the State Police Barracks. Much of the storm drainage of the Easton area can be coordinated with the existing stream valleys within this region. Much of the area will ultimately need community utilities to support extensive residential development due to improper soil conditions. Annexation of this area also eliminates islands or peninsula which the Town currently surrounds and would better define the Town eastern edge.

Area F containing approximately 300 acres of land currently devoted to agricultural uses. One large farm has dominated the region. Portions of the Farm and adjacent areas have been recently annexed and commercially zoned. Areas in the

southern portions of area are currently or have been developed for primarily residential use. The designation of this area for annexation is also designed to better balance definition of the Town's eastern edge which may in the longer term future accommodate transportation improvements suggested in the Transportation Plan Element. Certain portions of the area are strategically located immediately adjacent to U.S. Route 50.

Area G encompasses a large farm west of Route 322 and north of Route 33. A portion of this farm opposite the intersection of Marlboro Road and Route 322 has excellent potential for development of a business commercial park. Commercial development in this area would be a logical westward extension of the existing Marlboro Road commercial centers. The remaining portion of Area G would be appropriate for industrial development.

LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The Easton Comprehensive Development Plan is the culmination of substantial effort on the part of the Planning Commission and the Town Council to re-establish a framework for the orderly and economically serviceable growth of the Town. Much of the Commission's effort was concentrated in developing policies as a guide for growth management decisions.

Many methods for implementing a local plan are of a subtle nature involving local public opinion and coordination of efforts and activities of local governmental units. Maryland law provides the Council with the legislative authority to assume a direct influence in guiding the growth and development of the community in a pattern, and at a rate, which can be effectively served by existing and proposed community facilities.

It is the purpose of this section of the Plan to describe major development concepts of the Easton Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. These two ordinances are direct regulatory devices for assuring orderly and harmonious growth in accordance with the Plan.

Zoning Ordinance

One of the most important concern's of the Town is and will continue to be the control of land use. To avoid erratic and untimed development practices which have seriously jeopardized the environment of other communities, it will continue to be necessary for the Town to maintain land use controls which ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Development Plan. Land use controls should be maintained to minimize the number of incompatible uses which create adverse relationships among residential and commercial/industrial neighbors. Likewise they assure future development of vacant land is done in conformance with defined minimum standards.

The Land Use Element identifies land use policies established as the framework for the plan. The Zoning Ordinance is the regulatory device adopted by the Council which implements the Comprehensive Development Plan. Each zoning district should be reviewed to assure consistency with the Conceptual Land Use Plan and both the

zoning maps and ordinance text should be re-evaluated upon adoption of the plan to assure consistency with planning objectives and policies.

Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance should be consistent with the following concepts:

- * The Zoning Ordinance should maintain a land use pattern which is the least disruptive to existing Town and neighboring County residents. Proposed zones should be substantially in conformance with the existing pattern of uses and the pattern of uses proposed through the Land Use Plan Element and Conceptual Development Plan Map.
- * The variety of zoning districts should be revised to correlate anticipated future development with the established settlement pattern of the community, while providing for the full range of uses required to support the residents shopping and employment needs.
- * The location of Zoning districts should direct future intensive development to areas where it can be efficiently served by existing community facilities.
- * Existing site plan review standards and the review process provisions within the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed and revised if necessary to implement land use plan concepts.
- * The proposed Zoning Ordinance should direct both industrial development and commercial development into predefined clusters. Development standards should be incorporated wherever possible within each zoning district which assures impacts to residential areas are minimized. Only uses which are designed to minimize conflicts with existing residential uses should be permitted near residential areas.
- * The proposed Zoning Ordinance should establish greater performance standards than have previously been utilized in the community, particularly in the C-3 commercial district. In an area which has emerged from a rural, less intensively developed community, design standards can do much to blend new development with the existing image of the Town. This is of particular importance concerning future commercial development along the Route 50 corridor which defines the entry to the Town. Development in this area should assure its sufficient depth from the corridor Right-Of-Way to permit a substantial landscape buffer between the highway and adjacent land uses. Likewise, access points to future commercial uses should be limited along the Route 50 corridor (preferably some 1400 feet apart). Decisions to zone land commercial should assure a minimum depth to frontage ratio of 1 to 1 is maintained to assure development need not be strip in form and that adequate land area to accommodate a landscaped buffer is provided.

For a better understanding of the relationship of the Zoning Ordinance to general land use policies, a brief description of each land use category to be implemented through the Zoning Ordinance is included.

Agricultural District

The Agricultural District should be maintained to protect the natural characteristics and agricultural activities within areas which may in the future be developed. The purpose clause of Section 501 of the Town Zoning Ordinance should however be revised to delete the reference to extra territorial zoning authority.

A variety of factors should be considered in area designated within the Agricultural District, including the value of land located near the corporate limits, and the need for retaining prime land in agricultural use. Regulations and standards which protect and promote a full range of agricultural and related activities are likely more appropriate in outlying County areas. The District should discourage premature low density residential development, which if later annexed by the Town is less serviceable or poorly configured to support town-scale development and extension of Sewer and Water facilities.

Commercial Areas

Particular emphasis should be placed upon recognizing future development trends as they relate to commercial enterprises. Commercial districts should provide for a variety of commercial and service uses located in accordance with local demand and characteristics of the enterprise, rather than establishing a single commercial district. Their development should be in accordance with design standards that assure they are well planned in form to serve retail functions. The C-3 district in particular should be structured to assure high quality development standards are met as future commercial development occurs on the Route 50 corridor. A new zoning district with stringent development standards for landscaping and buffering should be designed to accommodate future Business/Commercial Park development. Another new commercial district should be developed for local commercial centers to ensure they remain compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

Industrial Districts

The Easton community has emerged primarily as a regional retailing and service center. Continuous diversification of the Town's industrial base will be required to maintain a variety of job opportunities for residents of the region. To accommodate existing trends established in certain areas of Town and permit continued development in accordance with the conceptual Land Use Plan, both industrial districts should be maintained.

*** Select Industrial**

The "select" industrial district is designed to reserve certain land areas for selected industrial and institutional uses. Development standards should require activities to occur within the confines of the building. Development should be limited to operations which can be conducted in a clean, unobtrusive manner. Regulations should be maintained which protect abutting or surrounding districts.

* General Industrial

The general industrial district should be maintained for locating the range of light industries which require Industrial Park settings. These general industrial districts should be established where a number and variety of industrial activities can be conducted. Their location will be in the airport environs and between Routes 328 and 331 East of Route 50.

Residential Areas and Density Standards

To institute more realistic standards for guiding population in various spatial patterns in Easton and adjoining areas, density controls should be established which are oriented to the number of bedrooms per acre. Standards would be used to evaluate all single family housing, duplexes and multi-family developments. Creative layout and design of residential living environments should be encouraged through ordinance provisions which permit mixed housing types and housing diversity through cluster and planned residential development standards. Density limits as opposed to minimum lots sizes should be used in some districts to guide the scale of residential Development. Density standards permit the number of units on the site to be determined by gross land area, but permit grouping a clustering of units to provide open space, buffers from nearby major roads and yield more creative and affordable design.

Suggested population densities of the Plan are reflected in a bedroom per acre standard in the current Zoning Ordinance. In keeping with this concept, the following density definitions based upon the number of bedrooms per acre are suggested as standards to be maintained through zoning.

- * High Density - 15 bedrooms per net acre.
- * Medium Density - 9 bedrooms per net acre.

The Town's R-7A and R-10A Residential zoning districts should continue to accommodate these two respective densities of development.

The basic purpose of publicly adopted density standards is to assure that future development of residential areas will occur at a scale which can be serviced within local fiscal capabilities without exceeding the capacity of service systems. In addition, standards prevent the overcrowding of land while providing suitable living areas for area residents.

Within all residential districts a variety of housing types and densities should be permitted consistent with areas designated in the Land Use Concept Plan as the "Mixed Residential One and Mixed Residential Two Districts, and the Town Scale Residential District".

Special Development Features

The Zoning Ordinance for the Town of Easton should maintain development standards to guide land use activities in appropriate locations. A major concern of the Ordinance should be to preserve or enhance insofar as possible the established character and atmosphere of the Easton community. In this manner, stated public policy is incorporated into local development regulatory ordinance structure.

Standards should be reviewed for off-street parking requirements, commercial development, multi-family developments, landscaping and buffer requirements, open space cluster developments, etc. Although uses may be limited to certain areas, standards must be met before the use is permitted. Provisions should be added to the zoning ordinance to allow for mixed use planned unit developments (PUDs) in order to encourage clustering of units and provision of open space. Smaller, clustered, more efficiently serviced PUD lots will promote housing affordability and not increase overall site density. Non-residential uses should be limited to a percentage of the site based on a sliding-scale determined by the PUD size. Non-residential uses should be developed in the PUD in a manner that ensures compatibility with surrounding residential areas. Non-residential uses should be of a nature and scale which are compatible with the residential neighborhood (e.g., day care centers, offices, neighborhood commercial, etc.), and should be adequately screened and buffered from adjoining housing areas. These standards should be revised to reflect the quality of development the Town wishes to promote.

Off-street parking requirements are related to concepts embodied in the Central Business District Plan Element. Only when the Town establishes municipally owned and maintained off-street parking areas, supported through taxes from a special taxing district, should uses within this particular parking district be excluded from providing on-site parking.

Special provisions are included in the zoning ordinance for encouraging the establishment of cluster developments with appropriate design controls. They should be reviewed to assure they achieve Comprehensive Development Plan objectives. Flexible standards are necessary in order to encourage interesting living areas with a variety of housing types.

All shopping centers must be developed in accordance with minimum development standards and in accordance with a Site Plan which is reviewed and approved by the local administrative officials as required by Section 609 of the Zoning Ordinance. These standards should be reviewed to assure landscaping and buffer provisions as well as access control and design standards are adequate.

The Zoning Ordinance is the single most important regulatory device to be adopted by the Council. Its impact upon the individual is substantial. Therefore, the Town should continue to enforce and administer it diligently and fairly, to assure it maintains the kind of orderly growth and development which is necessary for the continued well-being of all Easton citizens.

Recommended Zoning Ordinance Changes for Consideration

The Conceptual Development Plan Map advocates development along the Route 50 corridor, particularly along its Northern reaches which ultimately define the gateway to Easton. The form of development and standards established to guide it will be of paramount importance if the visual quality of development in the corridor is to be enhanced and the function of the Route to move traffic are to be preserved.

The Town C-3 Zone was designed to achieve these objectives. It should be evaluated to assure it accomplishes the following:

- A. Separation of Commercial use from the highway a distance of between 100' and 150'.
- B. Requirements for an intervening landscaped buffer between the Route 50 right of way and developed portions of Commercial sites. Landscaping should be specified in minimum plant units per acre and should require canopy, understory and shrub level plantings as opposed to uniform evergreen plantings to enhance attractiveness.
- C. The zone provisions should more effectively limit individual lot entrances along the corridor or require service roads.
- D. The provisions should require site planning to provide for commercial uses in a court or shared access form as opposed to a linear corridor development form.

Areas of the Town or areas to be annexed which are already developed will likely undergo redevelopment in some form over time. A planned redevelopment district concept should be introduced within the zoning ordinance to accommodate this concept for areas or neighborhoods in transition. In this way transitional redevelopment might be accommodated where its results can be positive for improving neighborhoods.

This designation would be appropriate at Easton Point at such time as it is annexed and could conceivably be appropriate in other Town areas over time. It could be used to replace the R-87 Waterfront Residential District in the ordinance which has never been applied by Zoning map designation in the Town and thereby need not increase the bulk of ordinance text.

Subdivision Controls

The second major implementation tool available to the Town are the Subdivision Regulations. These local regulations currently provide for the control of land development practices, establish uniform standards of development and lot recordation, establish erosion control measures, guide the arrangement of streets, and establish the relationship between new subdivision streets and access routes and the existing street system of the Town.

Town subdivision regulations provide a regulatory tool for coordinating the private division of land into lots or parcels consistent with public policy established by the Plan. The Town's subdivision regulations provide Easton with a valuable implementation tool to accomplish the following objectives:

- * Assure that building sites are of a suitable size to support human habitation and accommodate residential, commercial, or industrial activities with sufficient land area for normal accessory uses.
- * Coordinate planned streets with the existing public street pattern and capacities. In addition, future streets can be effectively coordinated where designated as a method for regulating and facilitating the movement of traffic with a minimum of conflict, not only on a small area basis within the immediate subdivision, but on a community-wide scale as well.
- * To insure adequate on-site space for parking and recreation and the free movement of light and air, in addition to providing ample room to serve as a natural buffer against fire and other disasters.
- * To provide standards for providing the harmonious development of the community through the encouragement of the orderly and appropriate development of land in accordance with public policy.
- * To provide a method for coordinating and facilitating the provision of public facilities necessary to protect the health, welfare, and safety of existing and future residents of the area in concert with the financial capacity of the community to install these improvements in response to demand.

The primary purpose of the subdivision ordinance is to coordinate private development practices with public policy. To this end, the ordinance establishes basic standards and design principles for constructing community facilities. Although these facilities are paid for and installed by the private developer, they are ultimately dedicated to the Town for maintenance and ownership. Therefore, the regulations establish standards in advance of installation by the developer in order that the Town can be assured of developing a uniform system of public facilities, with appropriate costs borne by the beneficiaries of the future development.

Mapped Street Act

The Maryland Planning and Zoning Enabling Act, Article 66B, contains a little used provision which is identified as "Development in Mapped Streets". The State law enables the community to pre-plat the routes of various streets, to record this plat, and to prevent building within the right-of-way of the proposed road.

The authority of this section can only be used after the local legislative body has adopted the Transportation Element. The authority extends to all land areas which are a part of the jurisdiction covered by the subdivision regulations of the municipality.

The community is authorized to survey and plat streets well in advance of projected programs to improve streets. The process enables private individuals to coordinate the subdivision of their property with the future location of major roads. In addition, it permits the community to reserve major land areas for highway locations in advance of construction and to prevent the encroachment of development on reserved right-of-ways. This provision does not serve in lieu of condemnations or acquisition processes for street right-of-way which must be followed.

The Town's judicious use of the authority contained in the Mapped Street section of Article 66B is a direct implementation method for facilitating the movement of goods and people on a coordinated street system.

CHESAPEAKE BAY CRITICAL AREA PROGRAM

Recently the Town of Easton has prepared and adopted its local Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program. The Program establishes land use policies for development located within a 1,000 foot strip of land, within the Town boundaries shoreward of mean high tide or the heads of wetlands along the north and south forks of the Tred Avon River and Papermill Pond. Approximately 336 acres are within the Town's Critical Area. The Program establishes criteria for development relating to habitat protection areas, water-dependent facilities, forest and woodland protection, shore erosion protection, establishment of Natural Parks, agriculture and mineral resources. As a result of the adoption of Eastons Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program. The Town has made revisions and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to make them in accordance with the Program.

A major impact of implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program will be the requirement for more rigorous and stringent site plan review of development projects proposed within the Town's Critical Area. The Planning Commission has recently hired a professional staff planner to assist the Commission in review of development proposals and also with general implementation of the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.